

# DIGITAL PHOTO

ISSUE 201  
DECEMBER  
2015  
£4.99



**DSLR  
shootout**  
We name the  
best camera kit  
under £600

## SHOT IN THE DARK

**10** top tips for striking images  
when the sun goes down

**IMAGING  
SKILLS**

### Retro revival

Use the power of Photoshop to  
create all-the-rage vintage effects

**CAMERA  
TECHNIQUE**

### Portrait secrets

Pro advice for perfect headshots

**GEAR  
ADVICE**

### Take a load off!

Wave goodbye to sore shoulders  
with the ultimate DIY tripod sling

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& CAMERA  
SKILLS THE  
EASY WAY**

**+ PACKED WITH INSPIRING PROJECTS & IDEAS**



**STAY SHARP** Master your AF  
system for fast-action images



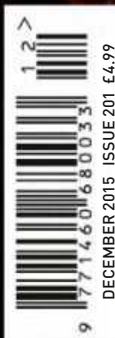
**CREATIVE COLOUR** Fuse camera  
& Photoshop skills for tri-colour pics



**BRANCH OUT** Turn everyday items  
into photo art with our challenge



**BUILD AMAZING COMPOSITES**  
Make epic scenes combining multiple shots



DECEMBER 2015 ISSUE 201 £4.99



# D7200

24.2

MEGAPIXEL

51

FOCUS  
POINTS

ISO

100-25600

ISO RANGE



BUILT-IN WIFI



## I AM AMBITION IN FOCUS

**I AM THE NEW NIKON D7200.** Start making big plans, because the D7200 is ready to push your potential to new heights. With the class-leading 51-point autofocus system inherited from Nikon's legendary professional cameras, you'll be faster and more agile than ever before. Capture a close shot of a race car taking a corner with extreme precision. Unveil the beauty of a skyline at sunset with a powerful 24.2 MP sensor and ISO up to 25600. Whatever your goals are, photos are easily shared with built-in Wi-Fi and NFC. Create a cinematic music video or a stunning time-lapse sequence. Discover how to raise the bar with the D7200.



Photo © Andrew Hancock

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*At the heart of the image*

# WELCOME FROM THE EDITOR



**A**s the nights draw in towards the end of the year, I always get excited! Not only does the prospect of golden dawn light arrive at a civilised hour, the chance of capturing dramatic night scenes turns up in the early evening, too. I've always been a fan of low-light shooting, because being out there in the dark with your camera feels like you've joined an exclusive club. Taking pics at night heightens your senses, and the wash of man-made light makes you look at the world in a fresh, new way.

By following the ideas and projects in our big feature on p26, you'll discover all the techniques you need to bag some amazing images. But the thrill of night

shooting goes way beyond the technical knowhow. The experience it gives can only be gained by doing it, so I urge you to give it a try!

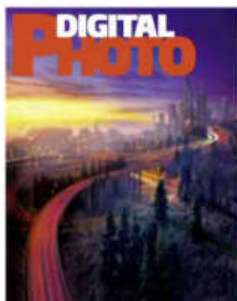
When back from your adventures, there's a raft of great imaging goodies with this issue to keep you occupied. Retro effects are all the rage right now, and to help you ramp up the emotion in your shots, we've got a vast range of presets, effects, borders and templates to pack your pics with character. Turn to *Photoshop Genius* on p69, and get set to turn back the clock!

Jon Adams, Editor  
jon.adams@bauermedia.co.uk

Jon

## ON OUR COVER

This month's cover image was captured by photographer Danny Seidman, who captured this dramatic stream of Seattle traffic twisting into the city with his Canon EOS 5D MkIII and 17-40mm lens. The low-light scene was further enhanced by the atmospheric mist that rolled in as the sun faded away. To see more of Danny's striking work, visit [www.northwestcapture.com](http://www.northwestcapture.com)



## 3 WAYS TO GET BETTER PHOTOS THIS MONTH



### 1 Creative shooting ideas to boost your skills

Make a funky portrait with a difference using a digital version of a film-based idea on p36.



### 2 Inspiring Photoshop projects to lift your pics

Transform shots with cross-processing, light leaks and borders for that cool, vintage look on p69.



### 3 The best reviews on the gear that really matters

Entry-level DSLRs are better than ever, and we pitch the top three against each other on p122.



WORTH  
£69



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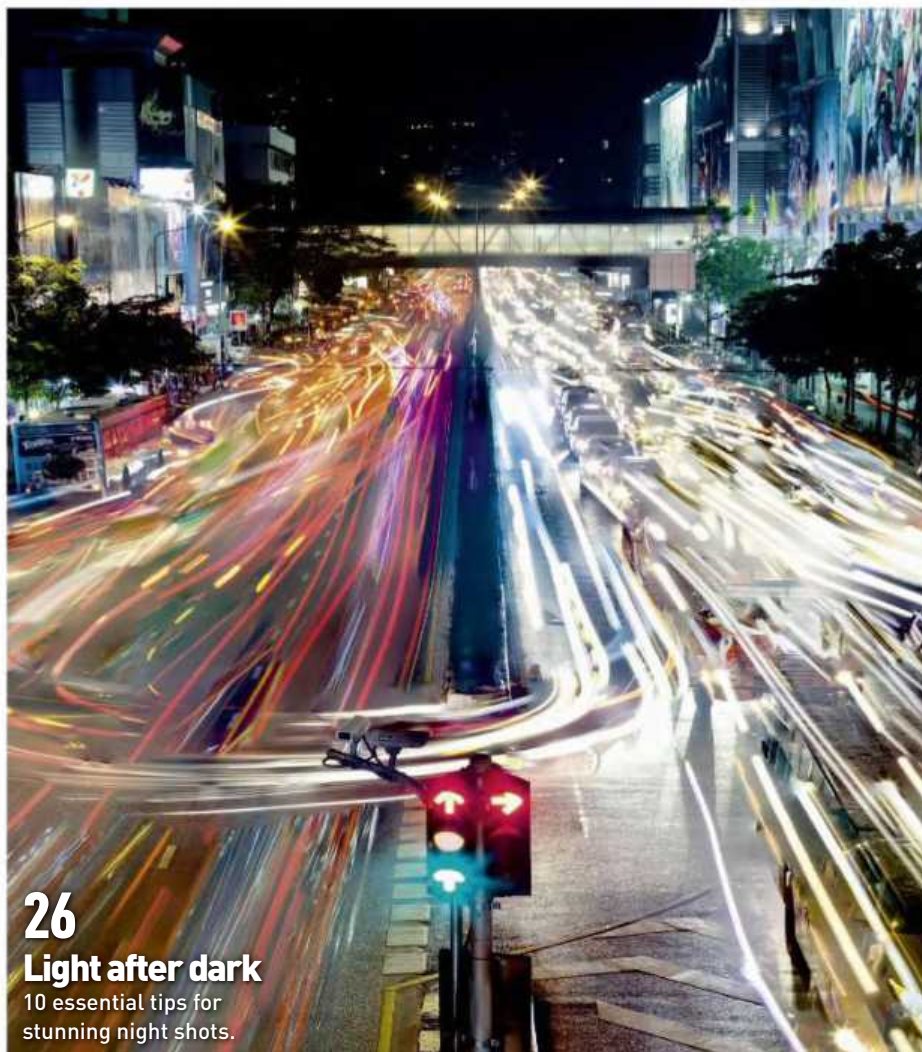
When you **subscribe** to the UK's best mag – see p24

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**Light after dark**  
10 essential tips for  
stunning night shots.



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The Ukrainian lawyer-turned-portrait photographer shares her unique approach to achieving stunning people pics.

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Our resident imaging medic turns to Photoshop to transform a hastily-shot Spitfire flypast into something entirely new.

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Take advantage of this fabulous offer and get a Lowepro camera bag thrown in when you sign up for a year's supply of the UK's best mag!

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Expert advice on brightening just one part of a picture, the lowdown on extracting a still from a 4K video, how to get your RAW files working and the pros and cons of gimbal heads.

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Tripods can be awkward to lug over hill and dale, but this low-cost adaptation makes it a breeze.

### 52 Shoot it now!

Make the most of fallen leaves with a seasonal portrait that'll prove a winner with kids of any age!

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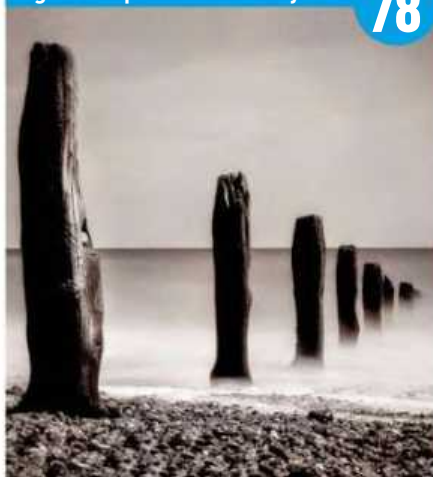
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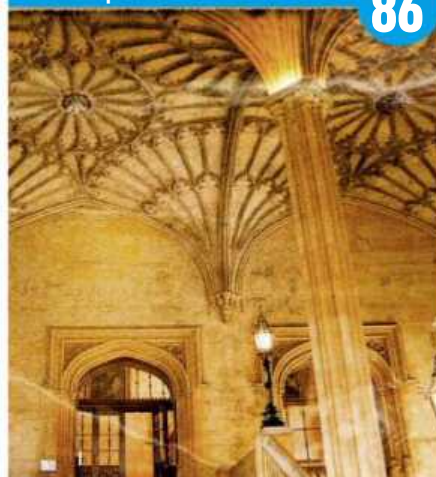
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Add your pics to our free templates and create your own personal greetings cards!



88 FREE card templates



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# VIDEO TUTORIALS ON YOUR **FREE CD**

**71**  
MINUTES  
OF EXPERT  
ADVICE

Pop the PhotoSkills CD in your PC or Mac and get set for the ultimate learning experience. There are nine in-depth video lessons on the disc, all brought to you by the same team of expert photographers that make the mag. Watching our experts talk you through



## WATCH EXCLUSIVE VIDEOS IN THE FULL PRINT & IPAD EDITIONS OF **DIGITAL PHOTO** **MAGAZINE** – AVAILABLE NOW PRICED £3.99

**Please note:** Accompanying video content is only available on the iPad and Kindle Fire HD versions of Digital Photo as sold via the Apple and Amazon App Stores / Newsstands, or alternatively it is available on the free CD accompanying each monthly print magazine. Video content is not currently available on or for the Digital Photo digital editions, as sold on these platforms: Google

Play Newsstand; Google Play Apps; Zinio; Readly; Kobo. Subsequently, please note that the 'Lite' digital versions on these platforms are discounted to take this into account. If you have any questions about any of our digital editions please email [digitalsupport@bauermedia.co.uk](mailto:digitalsupport@bauermedia.co.uk) and we will endeavour to answer as quickly as possible.

### + Also on your amazing interactive disc this month...



**+ Start images**  
Use these files to practise the projects with your own software.



**Reader gallery** +  
Inspiring pics from Digital Photo readers.



**+ FREE Templates, presets & effects**  
Take your imaging skills to the next level with these fantastic freebies!



# SIGMA



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## S Sports

### 150-600mm F5-6.3 DG OS HSM

A high-performance, high-end ultra-telephoto zoom lens that fulfils photographers' most stringent requirements.

Padded Case, Lens Hood and Shoulder Strap included  
Available for Sigma, Canon and Nikon AF cameras





# PLANET PHOTO

Your fresh fix of inspiration from the world's best photographers

## THE BIG PICTURE

### Capture an unstoppable tide



Shooting at the beach doesn't have to stop because we've moved into the colder months and **Russell McGuire** took advantage of an empty shoreline when he captured this image of the Newport Beach pier in California. Shooting with a wide-angle 10-18mm lens, Russell pushed the limits to get close to the water. "I had a number of waves hit me that morning that went a bit higher than expected and I ended up with more than just wet feet." Russell got the super-saturated look by capturing five frames and merging them together in Lightroom. He then boosted the Shadows in the image to reveal the texture of the timber posts and pushed the Saturation levels to make the colours pop. By shooting with slow shutter speeds, Russell was able to blur the motion of the waves as the incoming tide flowed around the pier beams.

#### What was used

**Camera** Canon EOS 7D & 10-18mm lens

**Exposure** 1/15sec @ f/7.1, ISO 100 **Software** Lightroom

**Visit** [500px.com/russellmcguire](http://500px.com/russellmcguire)





By getting close to the action, Russell was rewarded with dynamic motion in the waves.



Dani used the power of Photoshop to create this balancing illusion.



## CREATIVE PORTRAITS

# The art of balance



Perched precariously on a rocking chair, it may look like **Dani Ilinca's** model has impeccable balance. However, the genius behind this dramatic portrait is down to the clever, yet subtle, use of Photoshop. The Romanian photographer captured this image for a commercial fashion client, but had to find a way to balance the chair, while still making it look natural. "The movement of the rocking chair was a

challenge I solved with a number of bricks! These kept the chair steady so it couldn't move with my subject in place. I then removed the bricks with the Clone Stamp tool in Photoshop."

The wind-effect lift in the dress fabric was created by assistants holding up the dress, before they too were removed in Photoshop, just like the bricks. Dani even added volume to the dress by adding in extra layers of fabric. These were copied and pasted in from different frames taken

on the photoshoot. "The lighting for the shot was simple. I positioned one flash behind the model to match the light from the windows and another to the front-left of the subject," explains Dani. To complete the image, some basic retouching of the model's skin was undertaken in Photoshop.

### What was used

**Camera** Canon 5D MkIII & 35mm f/4 L lens

**Exposure** 1/160 @ f/5.6, ISO 100 **Software** Photoshop

**Visit** [500px.com/idaniphotography](http://500px.com/idaniphotography)



## GET THIS SHOT

### WIDE PRIMES FOR EVERY BUDGET

Dani used a 35mm prime to give a wide focal length and excellent quality. Here's our pick of four great options...



#### 1 Nikon 35mm f/1.8G – £136

Compatible with APS-C (DX) cameras, this Nikon lens offers incredible value for money and a fast f/1.8 aperture.



#### 2 Canon 35mm f/2 IS USM – £360

This sub-£400 lens gives Canon shooters a fast f/2 aperture, image stabilisation and autofocus override.



#### 3 Tamron 35mm f/1.8 SP Di VC USD – £579

This brand new full-frame optic from Tamron offers pro build quality, Vibration Compensation technology and a close-focusing distance of just 20cm. It's available for Canon & Nikon DSLRs.



#### 4 Sigma 35mm f/1.4 DG HDSM – £636

Available for Canon, Nikon and Sigma cameras, this lens give shooters superb image quality and a wide f/1.4 aperture – perfect for low-light conditions.



### Pro tips

“The biggest challenge is to show their true character”



Austria-based dog photographer **Ann Geier** offers her top tips to capturing professional-looking portraits of man's best friend...

**Make the most of the season...** Each season has its own special charm, but for me, autumn is the most beautiful thanks to the change in colours. The lower light breaking through the red leaves allows more creative lighting options.

**Shoot at eye-level...** The biggest challenge is to show your subject's true character within the frame. Shooting at eye-level helps the dog's stance appear more natural and gives a different view to what we usually see.

**Catch their attention...** Dogs are easily distracted, but those who like to play make good subjects for action images. For static shots use treats, toys or funny noises to hold their attention.

**Capture catchlights in the eyes...** Ensuring you get light reflected in a dog's eyes helps show their expression. Natural daylight is perfect for this technique, but with dark-eyed dogs, you may have to get the dog to raise their head to really capture the catchlights properly.

**Keep shots sharp...** The key to achieving a sharp image is to use the single central AF point as this is usually more sensitive than the surrounding points. If your dog is moving, switch to Continuous AF mode (AF-C/AI Servo). Select a large aperture (f/2.8 if your lens allows) to blur the background and keep the shutter speed high to ensure a sharp image free of camera shake.  
[www.annegeier.com](http://www.annegeier.com)



Drones offer an affordable route to aerial photography but is their use at risk?

NASEER ALOMARI

## WHAT EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT

# Is drone photography about to crash land?

There's no denying that drone photography has brought a fresh view on the world in an affordable way. In the past, if you wanted aerial images, you needed deep pockets and a head for heights because helicopters and planes were the only solution. Today, £800 will buy you a reliable and stable drone, capable of capturing high resolution stills and video from the air as you remote-pilot it and keep your feet firmly on the ground.

But there may be clouds brewing where the unmanned craft fly. A number of recent high profile incidents has done much to taint the

public's perception of these amazing gadgets and in September a UK drone enthusiast was fined £1800 and had his kit confiscated for flying near football stadiums. This has jeopardised the future of well-meaning photographers who only fly in remote locations away from the public. People like **Naseer Alomari**, who captured this amazing image of a camel train on the dunes in Kuwait using his DJI Phantom drone.

In the UK at present, if you are going to use a drone for commercial photography, you need to get permission from the Civil Aviation Authority.

Even for a hobbyist, there are rules to observe. It's illegal to fly a drone over a congested area, such as a city. You should keep the drone in sight and at least 50 metres away from cars or people.

We all appreciate that drones can be dangerous in careless hands, but let's also hope that the rules don't get any more strict. A drone ban would rob photographers of an affordable way to capture aerial shots and we would no longer see great images like Naseer's. What do you think about drones? Tell us on our Facebook page – [facebook.com/digitalphotouk](https://facebook.com/digitalphotouk)

## ESSENTIAL ADVICE

# 4 ways to stay onside with your drone photography

### 1 Get proper training

There's a number of companies offering training for drone photographers. Taking a course could not only fill in any legal blanks but will also improve flying and photo skills.

**Dan**



### 2 Ask permission

Although you may be within your rights to fly a drone at a certain location, it can save a lot of hassle to ask permission from the land owner. Courtesy and respect win friends. **Jon**



### 3 Fly at dawn or dusk

By shooting during the golden hours, you'll not only beat the crowds at often busy locations, but will also benefit from the most flattering light of the day. It's a win-win situation. **Matty**



### 4 Stay on top of the law

Drone laws are changing all the time, but it just takes a visit to [www.caa.co.uk/uas](http://www.caa.co.uk/uas) to read the latest rules. Keeping up to date will prevent you breaking the law by accident. **Andy**







## Introducing Blackmagic URSA Mini, the lightweight Super 35 4.6K digital film camera with 15 stops of dynamic range!

Introducing URSA Mini, a handheld Super 35 digital film camera with an incredible 4.6K image sensor, global shutter and a massive 15 stops of dynamic range! The super compact and lightweight design is perfectly balanced, making it comfortable enough for all day shooting. URSA Mini lets you shoot at up to 60fps, features a 5" foldout viewfinder, dual RAW and ProRes recorders, and more!

### Incredible 4.6K Sensor

URSA Mini can capture images at a resolution and dynamic range that goes well beyond that of traditional motion picture film so you can shoot your own epic, cinematic masterpiece! You can capture images up to 4608 x 2592, which is larger than 4K DCI, with 15 stops of dynamic range so you get incredibly clean pictures with amazing detail in everything from the darkest shadows to the brightest highlights! URSA Mini can record 4.6K at up to 60fps, or 1080 HD at up to 120fps.

### Lightweight and Portable

URSA Mini's perfectly balanced body is made out of space aged magnesium alloys so it's rugged, yet lightweight and comfortable enough to be used all day. You get a super bright 5" fold out touch screen for on-set monitoring, that can also display overlays for timecode, histograms, audio meters, focus peaking and more! URSA Mini features full size, professional connectors, even 12G-SDI, so you don't need custom cables, plus high quality stereo microphones and a side grip mounted on a standard rosette.

### Completely Customizable

Blackmagic URSA Mini is completely customizable so you can create a rig that's built specifically for your production! Add accessories like the Blackmagic URSA Viewfinder and Blackmagic URSA Mini Shoulder Kit, or choose from hundreds of third party accessories. URSA Mini has 9 standard 1/4" threaded mounting points on the top and bottom of the camera so you can mount it directly to a tripod as well as add accessories such as rails, matte boxes and more.

### Non-Stop Recording

You never have to stop recording because URSA Mini features two CFast 2.0 recorders! When one card is full, recording automatically continues onto the next. URSA Mini uses the latest, incredibly fast CFast 2.0 technology for recording speeds up to 350 MB/s. Wide dynamic range images are saved as 12-bit RAW files, which are perfect for high end grading and effects work, or as broadcast quality ProRes, for easy post production workflows with minimum storage requirements!



### Blackmagic URSA Mini Models

Blackmagic URSA Mini 4K EF	£2,025*
Blackmagic URSA Mini 4K PL	£2,359*
Blackmagic URSA Mini 4.6K EF	£3,355*
Blackmagic URSA Mini 4.6K PL	£3,699*

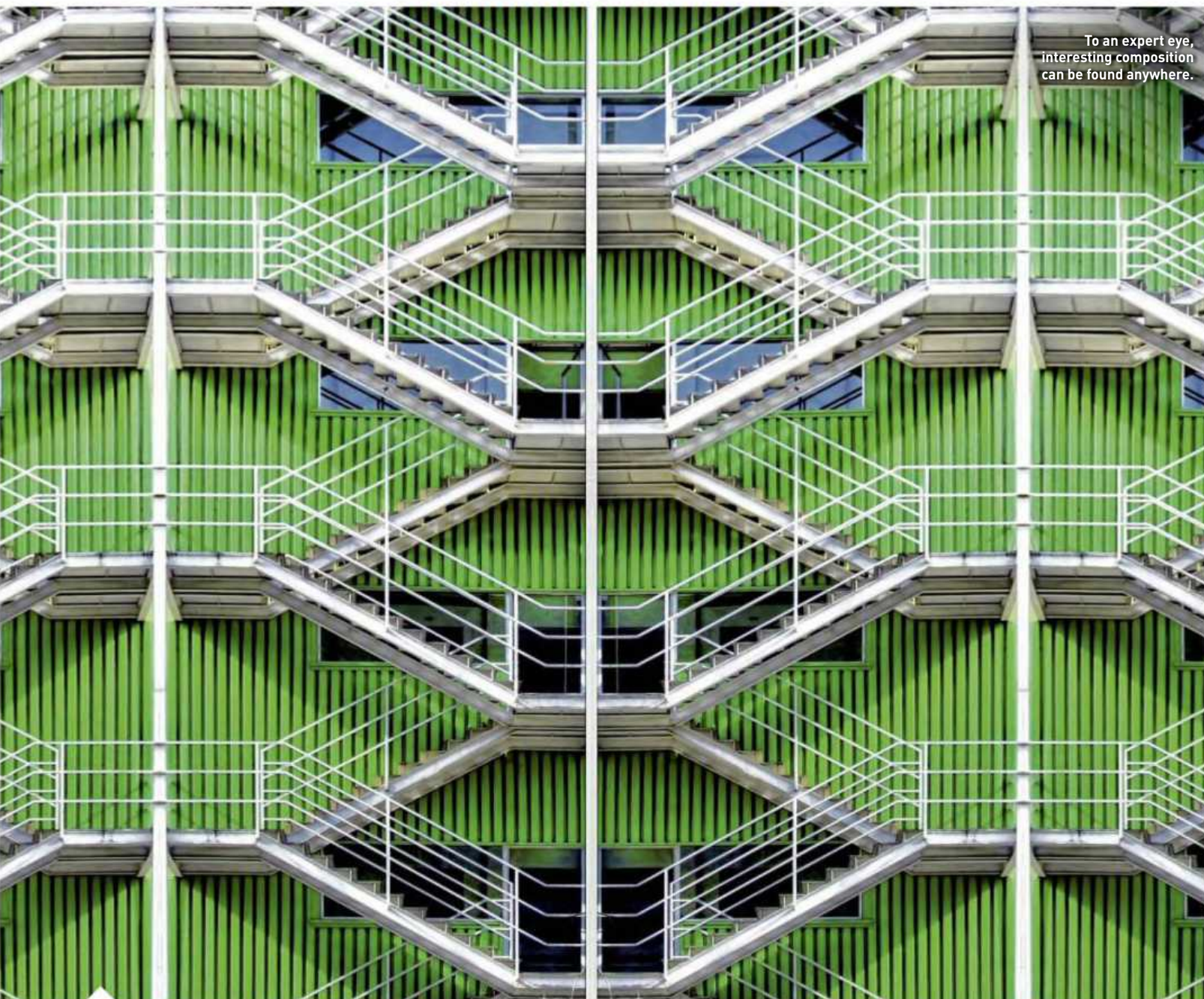
All models include DaVinci Resolve 12 Studio

[www.blackmagicdesign.com/uk](http://www.blackmagicdesign.com/uk)

Electronic Viewfinder, lens and accessories sold separately.

\*SRP is Exclusive of VAT.





## CREATIVE COMPOSITION

# Symmetry: Bringing balance to your frame

As the image above proves, symmetry is one of the most powerful compositional tools a photographer can employ in the pursuit of impressive imagery. By sourcing subjects with matching features in the field of view, and selecting a centrally-placed composition, a sense of order is instilled within the frame and our eyes take in the detail of a subject a lot quicker. Symmetry can be

found everywhere in both urban and countryside locations. From the mirror-like reflection of a mountain in a calm lake, to the balanced walkways of a building like in Alfonso's image, a keen eye will hunt down symmetrical subjects. Even if you spot a scene with potential, but the lines are slightly off, the power of Photoshop can be used to manipulate these lines into shape until they straighten up.

## Frames of the unexpected



Great images and fascinating composition can be found anywhere, as **Alfonso Trigueros'** abstract image demonstrates. The Spanish shooter was on the lookout for interesting subjects in a Madrid industrial park when he spotted the staircase of a factory. The hypnotic symmetry of the building cast a spell over Alfonso and he describes the photo opportunity as 'perfect'. After capturing the image, Alfonso noticed some misalignment caused by the lens, so turned to Photoshop to correct this. Using the Perspective mode of the Transform command, he quickly straightened up the lines to make the most of this intriguing abstract scene.

### What was used

**Camera** Nikon D7000 & 18-105mm lens **Exposure** 1/200sec @ f/7.1, ISO 200

**Software** Photoshop **Visit** [500px.com/alfonso novillo](http://500px.com/alfonso novillo)



# MANFROTTO NX BAG COLLECTION

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NX Bag is a stylish everyday bag that ensures the utmost protection for your camera and accessories thanks to the Manfrotto Protection System.

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Imagine More



**PUSHING THE LIMITS**

## Feeling the force



Mother Nature's force can be unstoppable and Artur Stanisiz's image of

Brandywine Falls in British Columbia is both a thrilling and unnerving example of its power. "Getting to the edge of the waterfall and shooting from this viewpoint required the use of climbing gear," explains the Polish-Canadian photographer. "I abseiled down to the lip of the waterfall and was standing within two feet of the edge of the cliff trying to balance my tripod, gear and myself on the slippery rocks." To make the most of the location, Artur used some advanced Photoshop skills, incorporating a technique he calls 'perspective blending'. "I used three 14mm horizontal images and stitched them by hand in Photoshop. This helped to keep a natural look in all elements, such as straight trees."

**What was used**

**Camera** Nikon D810 & 14-24mm lens

**Exposure** Various exposures, ISO 160

**Visit** [www.arturstanisz.com](http://www.arturstanisz.com)





ARTUR STANISZ

## PLUNGE INTO THE UK'S BEST WATERFALLS

While the waterfall in Artur's image is highly impressive, the UK has a fantastic selection of its own to line up in front of your lens...



ISTOCK

### Janet's Foss – Yorkshire

Named after a fairy queen, the beautiful falls boast a deep plunge pool and are situated close to the village of Malham.



ISTOCK

### Osmington – Dorset

Just a couple of miles west of the wonderful Durdle Door, the falls aren't high, but run straight onto the shoreline.



ISTOCK

### Sgwd Ddwli – Wales

Taking on a horseshoe shape, this stunning view is part of Neath Valley's Waterfalls Country area.



ISTOCK

### High Force – County Durham

Forming the historic border between Durham and Yorkshire, the 22m high falls are just off the B6277.



Around 20 hours  
of capture and  
processing work  
helped create this  
multi-layer piece  
of culinary art.







## BEHIND THE SCENES

# Fast food in the frame



Taking the phrase 'fast food' to new heights, London-based photographer **Piotr Gregorczyk** created this culinary composite in his studio for a men's fitness magazine. Shooting food may appear easy, but Piotr explained the challenges are unique. "Food gets dry very quickly, so it's important to keep a fresh supply nearby to keep the product looking its best." Some of the ingredients are too fragile to use, so Piotr substitutes them for model-making materials to get the best quality image.

By shooting the food elements individually with his Hasselblad H1, using a dark background and his Broncolor studio flash for consistent lighting, Piotr could then build up the composite using Layers in Photoshop.

Starting the same way you would make a real sandwich, Piotr began with the bread and added the lettuce and other fillings before bringing the frame to life by compositing in the splashing sauce. Once an element was added to the creation, Piotr had to make sure it was cut out correctly and fitted in the frame. The whole process took him a day to shoot and another full day to edit before he had completed the final image.

### What was used

**Camera** Hasselblad H1 & 50-110mm lens **Exposure** Various images @ f/11, ISO 50 **Software** Photoshop **Visit** [www.gregorczyk.co.uk](http://www.gregorczyk.co.uk)

## How the image came together...



By building the Layers in Photoshop, Piotr could add ingredient after ingredient for the ultimate composite.



# IT WORKS FOR ME!

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Pat backlit this pod by placing the sun behind it, and brought out the detail within.

## Backlit pod

by Pat Potter



**From** Lethbridge, Canada  
**Tell us about your image**

I'd already spent some time photographing this pod using side lighting when I saw the 'Capture the detail in a sunlit

leaf' idea in the July 2015 issue of the magazine. The technique of backlighting brought out all of the delicate little details in the bud that I had been unsuccessfully trying to capture on my own.

I started by lining up the pod with the sun behind it, carefully working around

the other plants in my garden as I didn't want to have to remove or disturb any others that were around my subject. I then framed up and took the shot with my Canon Rebel XSi (EOS 450D in the UK) and 100mm macro lens, adjusting the Exposure Compensation for a variety of results. In post-processing, I made tweaks to the Shadows, Highlights, Whites, Blacks, Exposure, Temperature and Clarity in Adobe Camera Raw.

The finished effect gives the bud an almost papery appearance – it reminds me of an oriental paper lantern.



## Round we go

by Mark Kember



**From** Godmanchester, Cambridgeshire

**Tell us about your image** A single image from this motorsports event wouldn't have been anything special in isolation, but this sequence of nine images displays the full story of this motorcycle jump.

I'd already taken this series of shots with my Canon EOS 70D and 17-85mm lens when I saw the 'Capture sporty action sequences' tutorial featuring a skateboarder in the September 2015 issue. I hadn't taken a



After shooting a burst of shots from a static camera, Mark merged nine frames into one to tell the whole story.



tripod with me on the day, so I balanced my camera using some railings to keep it steady between shots.

The image-editing technique in the magazine gave me all the information I needed to be able to combine my shots together into this final image. Using Photoshop CC, I followed the step-by-step tutorial as described in the mag. Starting with the first image in my sequence open

on screen, I copied and pasted the second image onto a new Layer. I then added a Layer Mask and painted into the Mask with a black brush to reveal the subject from the first image beneath.

I continued to paste in and mask out the remaining images in the sequence, being careful to only reveal the biker in each, until I achieved the finished effect with all nine images combined into one dramatic scene.

**“A SINGLE IMAGE FROM THIS EVENT WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ANYTHING SPECIAL IN ISOLATION, BUT THIS SEQUENCE OF NINE IMAGES DISPLAYS THE FULL STORY”**



Tim brought out the detail across the tonal range of his Forth Bridge shot using HDR techniques.



## Forth Rail Bridge by night

by Tim Hadfield



**From** Thornton Cleveleys, Lancashire

### Tell us about your image

The Forth Rail Bridge is an imposing structure, perfect for the HDR treatment. During a visit to Edinburgh, I found this viewpoint and set my tripod up to take a few shots with my Nikon D7200 and 18-200mm lens while there was still some light in the sky. The lighting on the ironwork, together with the

flowing water and moving clouds, meant that every shot gave a different result.

Inspired by the 'Get the HDR look' tutorial in the November 2014 issue, I used the Photomatrix Essentials 4 software that came with the mag to combine three shots with Exposure Values of -1, 0 and +2. Then, using Nik software, I brightened selected parts of the image and applied some Noise Reduction to the sky. I was careful to maintain a realistic finish to my HDR image, avoiding any garish, over-processed results.

### Original pic



## The deer rut

by Mark Rutley



**From** Fareham, Hampshire

### Tell us about your image

Inspired by the 'Go wild this autumn' feature in the November 2015 issue of DP, I went out to shoot some local wildlife.

Keeping a safe distance and waiting for the right moment, I framed up on these two rutting stags and took the shot with my Canon EOS 7D MkII and 100-400mm lens. Although there was already some mist around at the time of shooting and the sun was casting some pleasing light, I decided to blend in some more in Photoshop to add extra impact and atmosphere. I was careful to keep this subtle and realistic so as not to detract attention from my subject.

With the light and nature at its best, this really is a great season for shooting!



Mark's patience allowed him to capture this great wildlife moment.



## Raging river



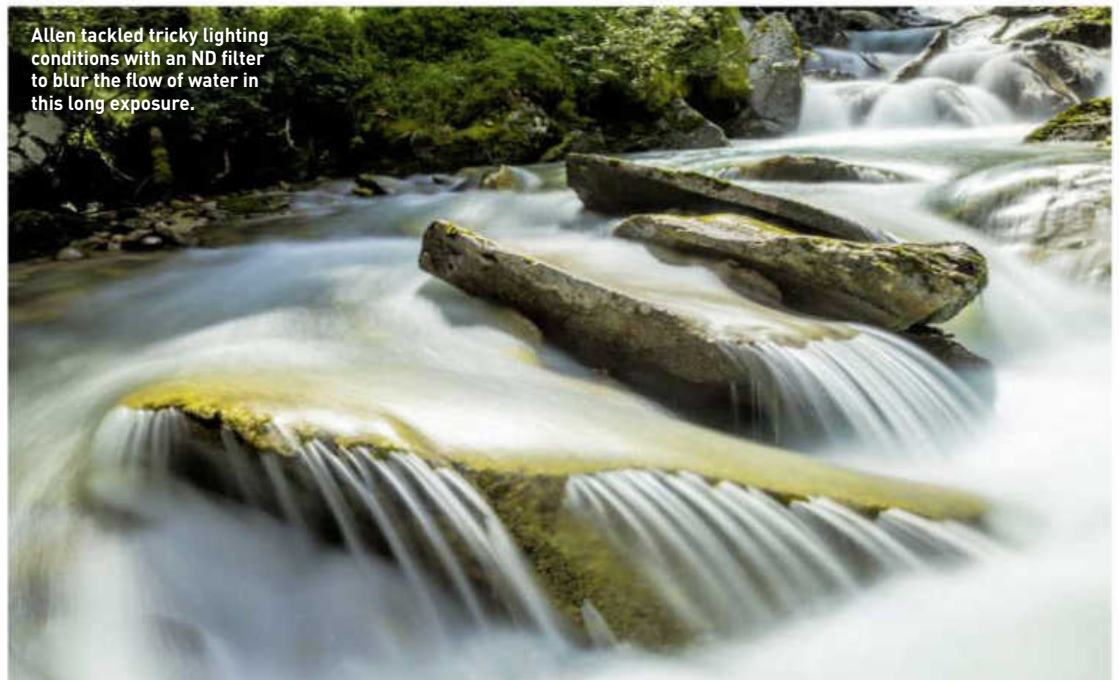
**From**  
Marienfeld,  
Germany  
**Tell us about  
your image**  
After reading  
about ND

filters, long exposures and processing RAW in Lightroom in the April 2015 issue of the magazine, I thought that I'd take the opportunity to try the techniques out while on holiday in Austria.

I invested in the Hoya screw-on ND1000 prior to going and hoped that I would find a river that I liked and that allowed me to get in amongst the water. There are rivers in abundance in Austria, but it took some time and quite a few miles of walking before I found the right one. I used my Nikon D750 with a 24mm prime lens on a travel tripod to capture this image.

It took quite a few attempts

Allen tackled tricky lighting conditions with an ND filter to blur the flow of water in this long exposure.



to get the right shutter speed for a good exposure as the sun kept appearing and disappearing behind the clouds. But with some trial and error I managed to capture a shot I was happy with. This one is a

5secs exposure. In Lightroom, I adjusted the temperature to warm up the scene and made minor adjustments to the highlights, shadows and contrast until I was satisfied with the overall look.

**Original pic**



Penny turned her shot of the Taj Mahal into a powerful silhouette.



## Indian magic



**From** Bideford, Devon  
**Tell us about your image** I took this shot of the Taj Mahal with a Nikon Coolpix P90 – my lightweight holiday camera. The unmistakable, iconic outline proved perfect for the 'Turn

skylines into dramatic silhouettes' technique in the November 2015 issue.

Using the Quick Selection tool in Photoshop CS5, I carefully made a Selection of the sky, zooming in to the image to capture every area of detail. I then punched the inverse of the Selection onto a new Layer and filled the building and foreground

**Original pic**



with black to create the silhouette. With that done, I then added the sunset by pasting it onto a new Layer behind the silhouette. The building's outline really pops from the scene, successfully turning a common holiday snap into a dramatic, eye-catching image.

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WORTH  
£69

**L**owepr's Urban Reporter 350 is a versatile messenger bag with plenty of space for carrying your camera, lenses, laptop and accessories.

Outside, it has a classic, refined look. Inside, it's fully equipped with padded inserts that are both adjustable and removable to suit any arrangement of kit-carrying load, all easily accessed via the main top opening, zipped front pocket and side cargo pockets. For carrying comfort, there's an anti-slip, adjustable shoulder strap, designed with padding so that it stays securely in place when you're on the move.

With its spacious interior and selection of storage options, the Urban Reporter 350 is the ideal companion for carrying all the kit you'll need.

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# 10 TOP TIPS FOR SHOOTING LIGHT AFTER DARK

The photo fun doesn't have to stop when the sun goes down. Read our ten golden nuggets of advice and inspiration to try out when the sun fades away...

WORDS BY MATTY GRAHAM

**Y**ou've drawn the curtains and are about to sit down with a nice cuppa on the sofa. But the flashing light from the battery charger has just turned green and now you get that familiar itch all passionate photographers feel. It's nagging away – you should be grabbing the camera and flying out the door, but it's dark outside...

Welcome to a whole new world of creative opportunities!

Low-light photography shouldn't be scary, but it's easy to understand why some back away from this fascinating genre. As humans, it's only natural for us to feel a little uneasy heading out into the darkness. Plus, many think capturing stunning images after dark is more difficult than

in the daylight. With the right knowledge, both practical and photographic, there is nothing to fear, and by jumping into night photography with both feet, you're guaranteed to bag some of your most creative images yet.

Our tips will arm you with all the skills and techniques needed to take your first steps into low-light shooting – or build on existing experience. Plus, there's the all-important practical advice that all photographers should consider to keep themselves safe and make a low-light shoot an enjoyable experience. You can own the thrill of the night and take advantage of the opportunities it presents, so now is the time to grab that freshly-charged battery and head out into the darkness!



## LOW-LIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY

Mark Burban used a 30secs exposure to capture traffic trails in the hustle and bustle of Bangkok.

**“WELCOME TO A WHOLE  
NEW WORLD OF CREATIVE  
PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES”**

**10 TOP  
TIPS &  
TECHNIQUES  
OVER PAGE**



# 1 FAIRGROUND ATTRACTIONS

Head to the fair for a dynamic and colourful long exposure

## Capture a wheelie great fairground long exposure

As the nights draw in, the fair rolls into town and offers a great source of low-light opportunities. One of the most dynamic shots to be had involves using a long exposure to turn a rotating ferris wheel into an abstract, coloured disc.

All you'll need to capture this high impact image is your camera and a tripod. If you have an ultra wide-angle lens, this will help you get closer to the wheel while keeping it in the frame, but the 18mm end of a kit lens will do the job.

## Set up a tripod

Place the camera securely on a tripod and frame up your shot. Make sure the entire wheel is in the frame. If this is hard to see, wait until the ride is in motion so you can see the trail created by the lights on the wheel and then zoom in or out for the best composition.



## Focus on your subject

Set the exposure mode to Shutter priority (S or Tv on the mode dial). This mode allows you to control the shutter speed, while the camera picks the appropriate aperture to deliver a good exposure. Dial in a shutter speed of 4secs to start, and set the ISO to its lowest value (normally 100). Half-press the shutter to focus on the ferris wheel, then shoot.



## Adjust shutter speed

Review your image on the LCD screen and if the ferris wheel hasn't made a complete rotation to create the coloured disc effect, increase the shutter speed to 6 or 8secs – whatever length of time is necessary for a full rotation. Reshoot until you get the desired effect.



With a long enough shutter speed, a ferris wheel can be transformed into a colour-packed abstract disc.

MATTY GRAHAM / BAUER





TIP

## 2 Trigger remotely to avoid shake

The action of pressing the shutter with your finger may seem innocuous, but it can be enough to introduce shake into the picture, especially with the longer shutter speeds needed for night-time shots.

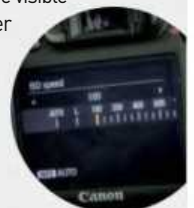
To cut down this risk, there's a number of ways you can trigger the camera without having to touch the shutter button. One option is to invest in some radio triggers, which can cost as little as £20 on the web. Yongnuo, Hähnel and Phottix all make wireless triggers, but make sure you buy a set that's compatible with your camera brand and model.

Alternatively, another option is to use your camera's Self-timer mode. This is activated by pressing the shutter button, but because the camera doesn't fire until after a 2, 5 or 10secs delay, any vibration that's caused by pressing the shutter will subside before the image is actually taken.

TIP

## 3 Keep ISO levels low

Although today's cameras do a great job of controlling digital Noise, the best image quality results come when a low ISO value is selected. Using a higher ISO makes the chip more sensitive to light and this increases the amount of Noise (grain and speckles) that are visible in the image. If a fast shutter speed isn't necessary, the best approach is to place the camera on a tripod and set the ISO to its base level, which on most cameras is 100.



**“ALL YOU’LL NEED FOR THIS COLOURFUL LONG EXPOSURE SHOT IS YOUR CAMERA AND A TRIPOD”**



# 4 LUNAR-LIT LANDSCAPES

Capture a classic landscape view using only moonlight

## Shoot a moonlit landscape that's rich in mood & detail

Keen landscape photographers spend huge amounts of time chasing golden light to shoot their chosen location. However, there's another way to illuminate a classic view and this technique uses nothing more than moonlight. By combining a long exposure with Mother Nature's lunar light, you can capture a famous landmark in a fresh way that will leave viewers asking the question photographers love: 'how did you do that?'

## Set up while it's daylight

Travelling to more remote landscape locations can be tricky when it's dark, so get to your shooting point while it's still light and have a torch ready for the journey back! Set up a tripod and secure the camera in place. Compose your shot, focus and then switch to Manual focus (MF).



## Dial in your basic settings

To prevent stars in the sky streaking into trails and giving an unnatural look, the shutter speed should be kept to 30secs or less. To fully control the exposure, select Manual mode (M) to bypass the camera's metering. Set a shutter speed of 30secs, a large aperture of f/4 and a low ISO of 100. Next, take a test shot.



## Fine-tune the exposure

A 30secs exposure can seem like an age to wait, but don't touch the camera until the shot has ended. Your image will soon appear on screen. Check the picture. If it's too dark, increase the ISO to 400 or 800. If the image is too bright, shorten the shutter speed.



It's bright enough to have been captured during the day, but this image of Durdle Door was shot in the dead of night.

**"BY COMBINING A LONG EXPOSURE WITH MOTHER NATURE'S MOONLIGHT, A FRESH VIEW OF A CLASSIC SCENE CAN BE ACHIEVED"**

JIM COSSEY



TIP

## 5 Look after yourself and your kit

When shooting after dark, the temperature will plummet and since you'll be standing still most of the time, you'll feel it! Taking steps to protect yourself and your kit will lead to a longer and much more pleasant photo experience. Don't head out without warm gear (jacket, hat, gloves and boots) or you'll most likely be heading back to the car with shivering hands after just 20 minutes. Pack a flask of something warm as a cuppa on a night shoot tastes great!

Your kit needs protection too. Cold temperatures kill batteries, so if you are carrying a spare, keep it close to your body in your jacket pocket. If there's any moisture in the air, clean your lens with a microfibre cloth before taking a shot, and if you're on muddy terrain, clean the tripod legs with a wet wipe before compressing them to avoid any muck clogging up the joints.

On a practical note, it's important to stay safe so always tell someone where you're heading. If a location looks dangerous to access or shoot from, don't risk it. If you're nervous about shooting after dark by yourself, team up with a like-minded photographer buddy.





# 6 TRAFFIC TRAILS

Make for the high street to capture dynamic streaks of light

## Try shooting traffic trails the easy way

Here's a fantastic technique that really brings the city to life when the sun goes down. A long exposure is critical to allow enough time to record the bright car lights as they zoom through your frame – you'll need a camera with a Manual mode for best results. Although movement is critical to traffic trails, you want the surroundings to remain sharp, and with the shutter open for several seconds – a tripod is an absolute must. Always set up in a safe place that's away from traffic and pedestrians.

## Set up on a tripod

Find a spot next to the roadside or seek out a vantage point like a footbridge over a dual carriageway. Frame up on an area of road that plenty of cars will pass through. Place your active AF point about a third of the way into the frame, half press the shutter to focus, then switch to Manual Focus to lock the focus distance.



## Dial in your settings

Put your camera into its Manual mode and dial in an ISO of 100, Aperture of f/16 and Shutter Speed of 10secs. Turn on the 2secs Self-timer or use a remote shutter release cable to avoid camera-shake. Press



the shutter when cars approach and check the exposure on the rear screen – if it's too dark increase the ISO a little and if it's too bright, reduce the shutter speed.

## Combine trails in Photoshop

Open up two of your trails, then hit **Ctrl+A**, **Ctrl+C** followed by **Ctrl+W** to copy the pic and close it down, then press **Ctrl+V** to paste one shot on top of the other. In the Layers palette (**Window→Layers**) change the Blending Mode from **Normal** to **Lighten**.



Use a long exposure to record car headlights as they swerve through your frame.

TIP

## 7 Do your research first

As with any genre of photography, a little planning can make a big difference – both to the quality of your images and the overall experience of being out with your camera. For example, if you're heading out to shoot a landscape, make sure the car park you're planning to use will still be open when you arrive and, more importantly, when you get back after the shoot. If you're shooting traffic trails, a little research will tell you when the stretch of road you're planning to shoot will be busy. Rush hour is always a good bet, but scouting your location the day before could make the difference between a dynamic shot and a bunch of useless frames!

DAN MOLD



**“TRAFFIC TRAIL IMAGES  
REALLY BRING CITY  
STREETS TO LIFE AT NIGHT”**

TIP

## 8 Pack the right tools for the job

While a charged up camera and a clean lens are important, packing some useful accessories will make your low-light shoot a much more pleasant experience. A great start is to pick up a head torch. These start at around £5 and can even be bought from your local supermarket. These gadgets will not only help you see what you're doing but will also give you two free hands to adjust your tripod, set up the camera,

pack and unpack your gear and finally, find your way back. If your budget allows, buy a headtorch with a red LED option, as this will help you maintain your night vision, rather than blinding you. The Gamma head torch from [www.alpkit.com](http://www.alpkit.com) costs £17 and has both a bright white and a red LED.





# 9 FULL MOON TIME-LAPSE

Merge the motion of the moon into one fantastic frame

## Make the earth move with a lunar time-lapse

The moon is not only a great light source for night time shots, it can also become the main focal point as well. The moon moves through the night sky, but when you capture just one frame, you can't illustrate this movement. By shooting multiple frames and merging them using Photoshop or Elements, you can create an intriguing lunar time-lapse. All you'll need is a tripod and camera, but to add a sense of interest and scale to the image, look for a scene with a good foreground.

## Switch to Manual Focus

It's vital the camera doesn't move between the shots in your sequence, so set it up on a tripod and lock off the head. Place your AF point over the foreground, and half-press the shutter to get a lock. If you struggle to focus, shine a torch onto the subject. Once you've found focus, switch to Manual Focus (MF) to keep it there.



## Capture the images

Set the camera to Manual mode and dial in an aperture of f/8, and a shutter speed of 1/125secs.



Set the ISO to 100. Use RAW format to give more flexibility in editing (see Tip 10 on the right). Start shooting as soon as the moon appears, and leave a 20-minute gap between each picture.

## Merge your moons

With all your files open in Photoshop, select an image at a time (**Ctrl+A**) before copying (**Ctrl+C**) and pasting each one (**Ctrl+V**) onto the first image you took. Next, add a **Layer Mask** to each Layer you created. Select a black brush (hit **D** to reset the colours) and paint out everything on each of the Layers except the moon itself.



MATTY GRAHAM

**“LOOK FOR A SCENE WITH GREAT FOREGROUND INTEREST TO ADD SCALE TO THE FRAME”**



TIP

## 10 Shoot in RAW

When it comes to low-light photography it's important to shoot in RAW. With locations bathed in

darkness, you'll want to adjust the exposure back at the computer and RAW files offer far more tolerance for adjustments than JPEGs, enabling you to rescue detail and get more from your images. Once you've captured your shots in the RAW format, you'll need software to edit and convert the images.

Both Photoshop and Elements come with Adobe Camera Raw built in, but there's also Adobe's standalone Lightroom software, and most camera brands include their own RAW conversion software in the box with a DSLR or CSC.

While RAW conversion software can enhance photos in many ways, there are three specific sliders that are worth their weight in gold when it comes to editing low-light and night imagery...

**Exposure** This global adjustment slider is designed to brighten or darken your frame. When you want to brighten the image, drag it to the right. Dragging it to the left will darken the frame. Use this slider in conjunction with the Histogram and aim to place the graph's data in the middle, rather than to the left or right points of the Histogram.

**Shadows/Highlights** These two sliders can recover detail from areas of your picture that are over or underexposed. Dragging the Highlights slider to the left will recover data from overexposed areas, while dragging the Shadows slider to the right will unveil detail from dark areas. In older versions of Adobe Camera Raw, these sliders are called Recovery and Fill Light.

**Noise Reduction** At night, your camera's sensor is more vulnerable to noise, especially with long exposures or if high ISO values are used. RAW software features Noise Reduction controls to combat the grain and speckles associated with this problem.

Using Photoshop Layers, you can assemble a moon time-lapse in minutes.



# CREATE A TRI-COLOUR PORTRAIT

Learn how to separate colour channels for a funky, pop-art look!

WORDS & PICS BY ANDY HEATHER

**T**here's a common fallacy that photo manipulation started with Photoshop, but the truth is photographers have been manipulating images since the birth of the camera and the tri-colour technique is a great example.

The process was pioneered in the film days and has now been plucked from the annals of history and resurrected by your friends here *Digital Photo!* Originally, this technique involved exposing three separate shots through red, green and blue filters onto the same frame of colour film. The camera didn't move during the shots, so anything static in the scene would be recorded with regular colours as the red, green and blue light would be combined. Anything moving would be rendered in one of the individual colours.

In this great project, we've taken the technique and given it a *Digital Photo* twist, so it's now possible to recreate the effect with ease in either Photoshop or Elements. When used with a landscape scene, moving features like scudding clouds or breaking waves will become a feast of colour, and when used for a portrait, your model will look like a pop-art icon.

Here, we'll explain how to shoot your three exposures on a tripod, ensuring that your camera remains in exactly the same position. We'll also give you all the info you need to be certain that your aperture and focus remain the same throughout. Once you've taken your shots, we'll guide you through the Photoshop steps required to create a multi-person portrait that'll delight your friends and family!



## Required kit

### DSLR or CSC

You can use any camera that can be set up for manual focus and aperture priority control.



### Tripod

The camera has to stay still between the three shots, so you'll need to attach it to a tripod.

ANDY HEATHER / BAUER





With the right shooting and editing knowhow, a fresh and striking tri-colour portrait can be made in minutes.



TECHNIQUE  
**STEP-BY-STEP**  
GUIDE OVER  
THE PAGE



## SET UP AND SHOOT YOUR TRI-COLOUR PORTRAIT

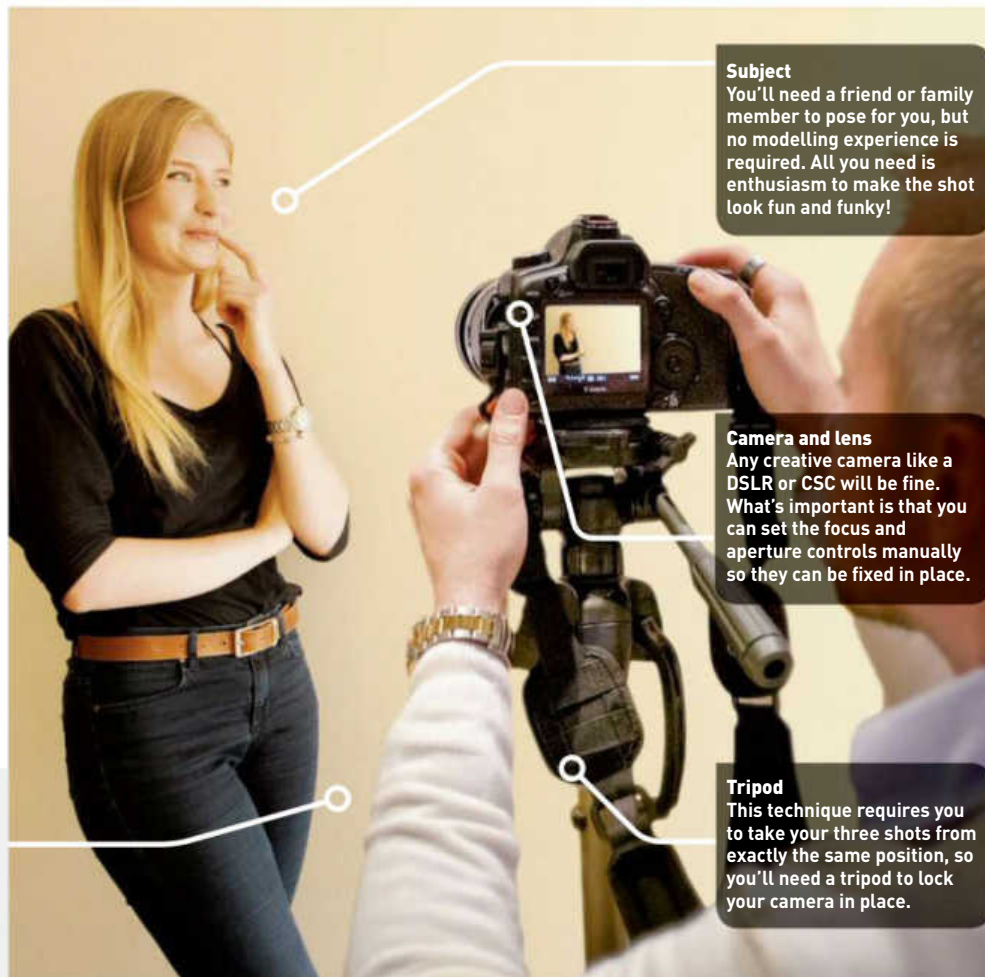
A great way to get started is to keep things simple. You'll need a model and a 'set' large enough for them to appear three times without overlapping. You also need room to set up your tripod, so something like a living room wall is perfect as a backdrop.

If possible, try and shoot in a fairly evenly-lit area as you want the colours to appear as vibrant as possible. Any dark corners in the frame could cause the colour effects to look a bit drab.

Controlled lighting or stable weather outside will help ensure that the brightness doesn't change drastically between shots. If you do use window light, make sure it's free from harsh, direct sunlight.

### Background

The background is vital to the success of the shot. The main reason for this is that a visually complex background can cause your subject to become barely visible. To ensure your model doesn't get lost in the clutter, use a bright, plain backdrop such as a white wall or make a studio-style backdrop using a white sheet.



### Subject

You'll need a friend or family member to pose for you, but no modelling experience is required. All you need is enthusiasm to make the shot look fun and funky!

### Camera and lens

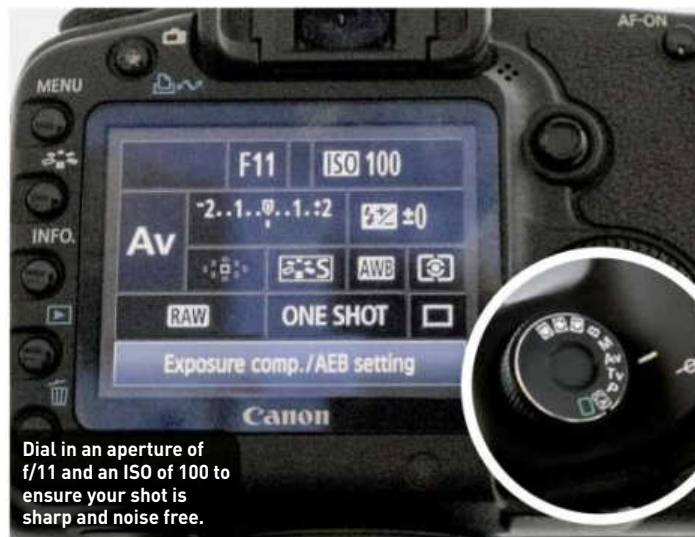
Any creative camera like a DSLR or CSC will be fine. What's important is that you can set the focus and aperture controls manually so they can be fixed in place.

### Tripod

This technique requires you to take your three shots from exactly the same position, so you'll need a tripod to lock your camera in place.



Find a location that's spacious enough for your tripod and your model in three poses.



Dial in an aperture of f/11 and an ISO of 100 to ensure your shot is sharp and noise free.

## 1 Secure your camera onto a tripod

Once you've picked your location and you know roughly where your model's going to be standing, it's time to set up your tripod. Your shot will need to be fairly wide, because your model's going to appear in the frame three times, but using a wide focal length can cause distortion at the edges of the frame, which is not always flattering for your model. They won't thank you if their face or body looks like it's being stretched and warped! To avoid this, set your camera's lens to a focal length of at least 35mm and back up until you know that you will be able to fit your model in the frame three times. Then attach your camera to the tripod in position, and make sure all the clips are tightened and secure.

## 2 Dial in your exposure settings

Set your camera to Aperture priority mode (A or Av on the mode dial) and select a medium aperture of f/11. This will create a large zone of sharp focus, keeping the scene pin-sharp from front to back. This means wherever your model moves to, they'll always stay in focus. In Aperture priority mode, your camera will select the right shutter speed for you. For the best possible image quality and lowest noise, use an ISO value of 100. Sometimes it's hard to get enough light to shoot at ISO 100, but your camera's already locked off on a tripod, so even if the shutter speed is quite slow there won't be any camera shake. You just need your model to stay as still as possible when you take the shots.



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## 3 Set and lock your focus point

Ask your model to stand in position for you. Use your regular AF mode, and place the active focus point over your model. Half-press the shutter button to set the focus (you'll usually hear a beep), then switch your lens to Manual Focus mode. This will lock the focus distance in place. Now you'll be able to press the shutter button as many times as you like without changing the focus. If you move the camera to a different position, you'll need to set your focus and lock it again.



## 4 Shoot your three photographs

Have your model stand on the left side of the frame and place a mark, such as a piece of paper, on the floor at their feet. Take a test shot and have them move to the centre of the frame. Drop another mark and take another test shot. Now review the images on screen and flick between them. If there's any overlap, move the marks apart and try again. Do this for the right-hand pose and try to keep the marks evenly spaced. When you've finished 'blocking out' the scene, have your model strike three poses and take your three shots. Remember not to change the aperture or focus.



## TECHTALK

### Focus point

Focus points often look like little squares in the viewfinder. They usually flash red or green when you half-press the shutter button to focus. Nowadays, most cameras automatically select which focus point(s) to use, but you can set this manually. Methods vary so check your manual to find out how.

### Locking focus

One benefit of the Manual Focus switch is that it can be used to lock the focus, so you can keep pressing the shutter button without causing the lens to refocus. After establishing focus using your camera's autofocus (AF) feature, switch your lens to manual focus (MF) to lock it.

### Blocking a scene

In the world of movies, 'blocking' is the process of figuring out where performers are going to stand before filming begins. This helps the crew set their lighting and focus in advance. It's a good idea for photographers too. Most people find posing quite embarrassing and often the first pose is the most natural. Blocking will help you avoid having to ask your model to recreate a moment because you missed the shot.

## Shoot on a staircase to introduce some depth to your composition

If you're in the mood to experiment while shooting, try introducing depth to your framing. For example, rather than have your model stand in three positions next to each other, you could have her move closer to or further from the camera. You could shoot up a staircase and arrange her in three different positions on the steps to vary the spatial relationships between the three figures. Playing with scale and depth like this can help draw the viewer's eye into the scene and make your shot even more interesting.

Just remember, anything that stays in the same position between shots, such as the bannister in this example, will retain its colour. That's because the red, green and blue channels will realign in Photoshop and produce natural colours. Anything that moves between exposures – your model – will appear as a single colour.

Also bear in mind that pale-coloured backgrounds will help the colours stand out, so seek out a staircase with bright walls. Also, it's fine to have your three shots overlap, so long as that's a conscious creative choice and isn't an accident on your part!



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PHOTOS



# A SMALL **LOGO** MAKES A BIG **DIFFERENCE**

**5** CONTINENTS **28** MAGAZINES **40** AWARDS



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# COMBINE & BLEND YOUR SHOTS IN PHOTOSHOP

Mix your three portrait shots together to create a fresh, colourful image. It's easy to do in Photoshop or Elements - just follow the step-by-step!

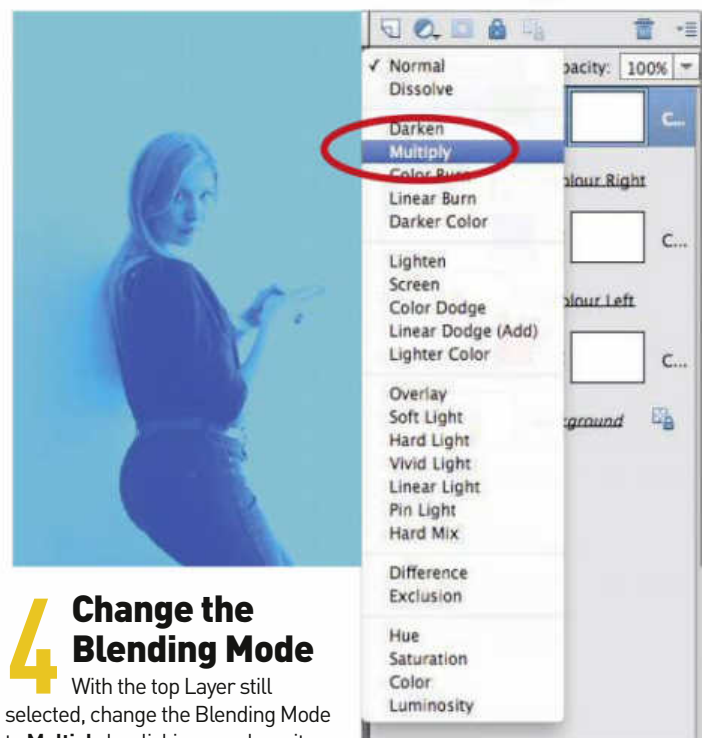
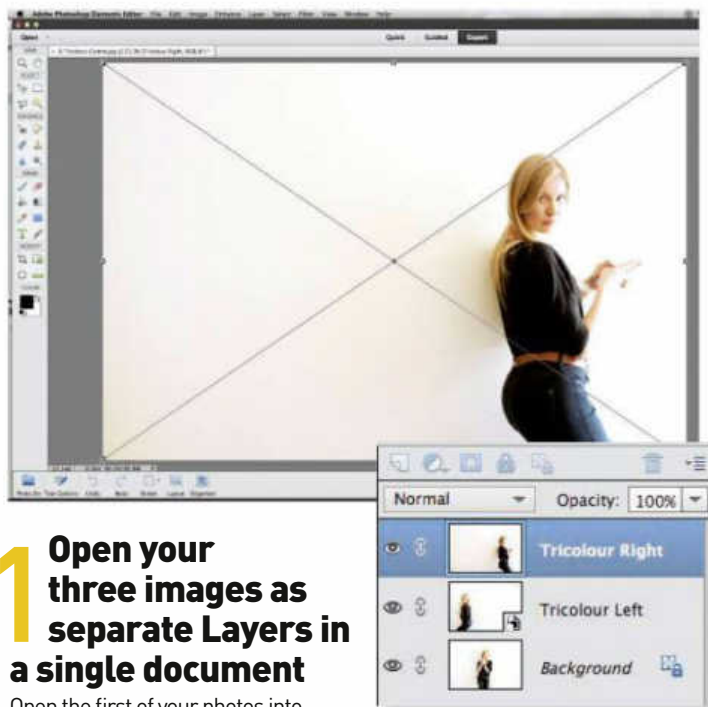
VIDEO  
LESSON  
ON THE CD



## 1 Open your three images as separate Layers in a single document

Open the first of your photos into Photoshop or Elements. If you'd like to practise the technique with the images we've provided for you, navigate to the Start Images folder and select *Tricolour Centre.jpg*. Once it's visible in the main window, you're ready to open the second image. To do that, go to **File→Place** and select *Tricolour Left.jpg* then hit **Return**. Finally, do the same with *Tricolour Right.jpg*.

In the Layers panel (**Window→Layers**), you'll see your images lying one on top of the other. The first one you opened is at the bottom of the Layers stack, the second one is in the middle and the last one is on top. At the moment, the only image you can see in the main window is the top Layer, because that one is obscuring the Layers beneath it.



## 4 Change the Blending Mode

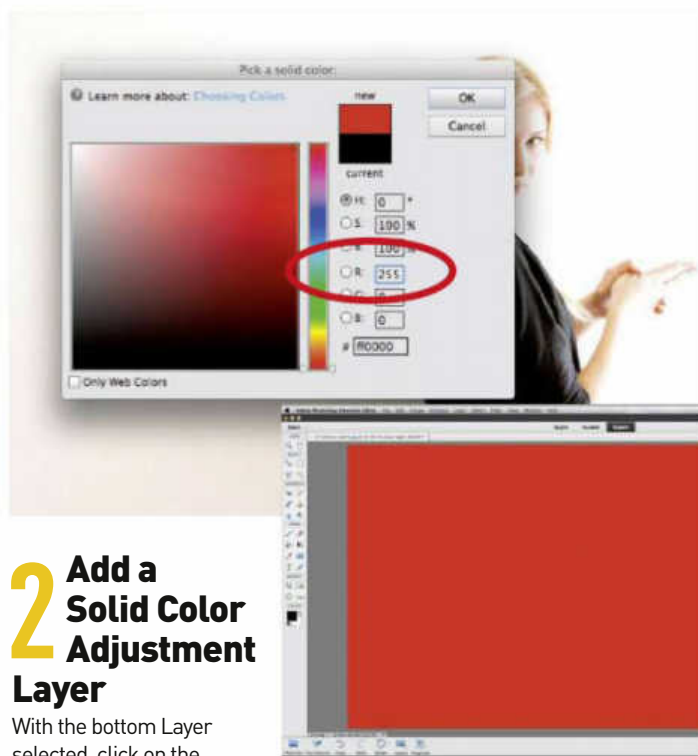
With the top Layer still selected, change the Blending Mode to **Multiply** by clicking on where it says **Normal** and selecting **Multiply** from the drop-down menu. The image will now be the right-hand shot of our model, but with a green colour cast. Select the next Layer down - in our example it's called *Tricolour Right* - and change its Blending Mode to **Screen**. When you're done you'll still see the model on the right, but now she'll have a turquoise colour cast.



## 5 Set the Blending Mode of the remaining Layers

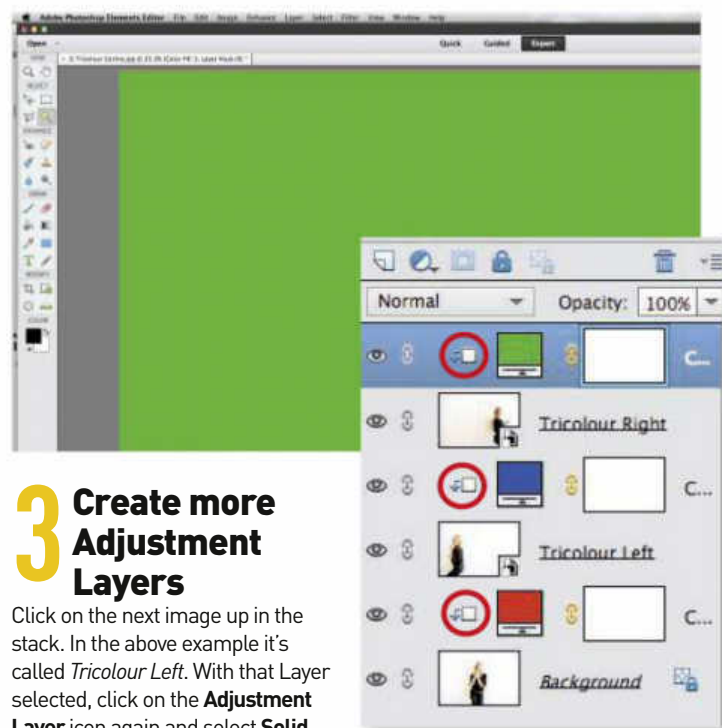
Select the next Layer down (the blue Solid Color Adjustment Layer), and change its Blending Mode to **Multiply**. Then click on the Layer beneath this, called *Tricolour Left* and change its Blending Mode to **Screen**. Finally, select the red Solid Color Adjustment Layer and change its Blending Mode to **Screen**. Leave the bottom Layer's Blending Mode set to **Normal**. Your image and your Layers panel will now appear as it does above. The background is white and each figure is a different colour.





## 2 Add a Solid Color Adjustment Layer

With the bottom Layer selected, click on the **Adjustment Layer** icon and from the drop-down menu select **Solid Color**. The Color Picker will open up, allowing you to select a colour for your new Adjustment Layer. Towards the bottom of the dialogue box you'll see the letters R, G and B (for Red, Green and Blue). In the world of RGB colour, 255 is the maximum integer value, meaning that entering 255 in any of these boxes, and 0 in the others will give you pure red, green or blue. Starting with the Red box, type in **255** and ensure that Green and Blue are set to **0**. Hit **Return** to accept the changes and close the dialogue box.



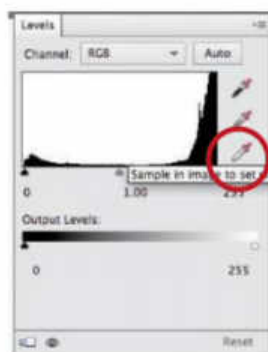
## 3 Create more Adjustment Layers

Click on the next image up in the stack. In the above example it's called *Tricolour Left*. With that Layer selected, click on the **Adjustment Layer** icon again and select **Solid Color** once more. This time, when the Color Picker appears, type **255** next to **B**. Hit **Return** to close the Color Picker, then select the top Layer in the stack. Repeat the process again, but this time type **255** next to **G**. Hit **Return**, then hold down the **Alt** key and click on the line between each **Solid Color** Adjustment Layer and its respective image. This clips each **Solid Color** Adjustment Layer to the image Layer, ensuring that the adjustment made will only affect that Layer. You'll know you've done it correctly when a small, downward-pointing arrow appears next to the thumbnail of each **Solid Color** Adjustment Layer in the Layers palette.



## 6 Set the white point

The shadows on the wall moved with the model, so the wall has been contaminated with various colours. Making it whiter will help the effect stand out. To do this, click on the top Layer, then click the **Adjustment Layer** icon and choose **Levels** from the list. In the Levels palette, click on the white eyedropper. This lets you tell Photoshop what should be white in the pic. Click on a discoloured section of wall and it'll be turned white. All that remains is to go to **File→Save As** and save your pic with a new name.



## + OTHER IDEAS TO TRY!



One of the major benefits of using Solid Color Adjustment Layers is that you can go back and edit them at any point, opening up new and unexpected creative avenues. Altering the colours of those Adjustment Layers can change the colour cast and mood of your image. Give it a try by double-clicking the thumbnail of any one of those Adjustment Layers in the Layers Panel to open a Color Picker dialogue box. Once it's open, click anywhere in the large, coloured square to change the Adjustment Layer's colour. As you do this, your image will change to reflect the edit you've made. Keep tweaking the colours of the Solid Color Adjustment Layers until your image has a colour cast you like. This technique can be used to create funky and stylish images that look great on birthday cards, band posters and flyers. When you're done, make sure you save your new image with a different name again, so you don't overwrite the image you just created.





UNDERSTAND  
& USE YOUR  
CAMERA'S KEY  
FEATURES

# AUTOFOCUS

Unlock the secrets of capturing truly sharp shots with your DSLR or CSC

TECHNIQUE & PICS BY BEN DAVIS

Setting a sharp focus point is one of the most vital aspects of taking a shot. Things like exposure and White Balance can easily be fine-tuned and adjusted with processing afterwards, but if you fail to capture sharp detail in camera, then there's little hope of your shot being a real 'keeper'.

Getting pin-sharp results though, is simple. All it takes is a little bit of knowledge about your camera's autofocus (AF) system – and ensuring you put it into practice – every time you shoot. This feature will equip you with the know-how to keep your subject sharp in any shooting situation, so you always capture top results.

## What is autofocus?

Both DSLRs and CSCs have advanced AF systems built in. These allow you to precisely set where the sharp point of focus will fall within your frame. You need to choose which focusing mode to use, and select which area of the frame you want to be held sharpest, but the camera will do all the hard work. Simpler cameras don't afford such control and automatically determine where the focus should be set. But quite often, they get it wrong. That's why it's always much better to be in control and dictate where you want the focus to be set.



DSLRs and CSCs allow you to precisely set up the autofocus system within the camera's menu.

Creative cameras also offer Manual Focus, so you can override the AF system and take responsibility for sharpness by adjusting the focusing ring. For the most part though, it's wise to rely on your camera's AF abilities. All you need to worry about is setting it up correctly so it can perform the task it has been designed to do.

## How does it work?

DSLRs and CSCs differ in how the AF point is set. The former use something known as Phase Detection. This splits the incoming

**“AUTOFOCUS SYSTEMS ALLOW YOU TO PRECISELY SET WHERE THE SHARP POINT OF FOCUS WILL FALL IN YOUR FRAME”**

light into two separate beams, which is then bounced by a mirror onto the focusing sensors. These sensors compare the two light beam signals. If they are identical, then the lens is accurately focused. If they differ, then the lens elements adjust until the two beams are in sync. This all happens within a fraction of a second when you half-press the shutter button.

CSCs on the other hand use Contrast Detection to set the focus, and the AF sensors are housed in the camera's chip to save internal space, rather than using a separate mechanism. It works by adjusting the optics until the maximum amount of contrast is detected. This is because when an image is in focus, edges are sharp and defined, thus there is more contrast between adjacent pixels. While this means CSCs can have more AF points across the frame, achieving focus this way tends to be a bit slower than DSLRs.

## Taking control of your camera's autofocus



Most cameras have a switch on the lens to turn on the autofocus system.

Turning on your camera's autofocus system is easy. On most DSLRs and CSCs it's controlled by a small switch on the barrel of the lens, usually reading AF/MF or MA/M, which allows you to flick between autofocus and manual focus.

Some cameras also offer another switch on the body itself, usually near the lens mount. If your lens is set to the AF position but your camera still won't autofocus, then check if it's enabled on the camera body.

There's a few indicators that will tell you that your camera's autofocus is working without taking a frame and inspecting the results. When the shutter button is half pressed, you may notice the focus rock back and forth as it settles on optimum sharpness, and even hear the motors within the lens working. Once focus has been set, your camera will likely emit a beep (unless it's been disabled in the menu), telling you that your subject is sharp.





“THE CONTINUOUS AUTOFOCUS MODE IS DESIGNED FOR MOVING SUBJECTS, LIKE SPORTS, ACTION OR WILDLIFE”

## WHICH AUTOFOCUS MODE TO USE



Within your camera's AF system, there are two options to choose from: Single and Continuous. The Single mode is designed for use with stationary objects, where the distance between lens and subject will not change. This mode is referred to as AF-S by Nikon and One Shot by Canon. The Continuous mode is to be used for moving subjects, like sports, action or wildlife. It's referred to as AF-C by Nikon and Ai Servo by Canon. Other manufacturers use their own names for these modes. Within both the Single and Continuous modes, most cameras offer further options for how you want the AF to perform, for fine-tuning its performance.

BEN DAVIS

## Three reasons why shots aren't sharp



**Focusing error** Usually identified by a blurred subject and sharp background. The only way to fix this is to take care when focusing.



**Subject movement** Detail on moving subjects is blurred, but static items are sharp. You can beat this with a faster shutter speed.



**Camera shake** All detail is equally blurred with ghosted edges. You can avoid this by keeping the camera still during the exposure.



## How to use autofocus on a stationary subject

Much of the time, the subjects we shoot remain still. Whether it's a landscape, still-life, portrait or architecture shot, they all require the single-shot AF mode to set the focus.

Like with most things, different manufacturers vary in how the single AF mode is selected. On more streamlined cameras like CSCs, the two different modes are often accessed via an on-screen menu. DSLRs however, are more likely to offer a button which is assigned to AF control.

Canon cameras have an AF Drive button – this needs to be held and the command dial rotated until you've selected One Shot. The information will be displayed on the top LCD, in the viewfinder or on the rear screen. If you're using a Nikon model, the AF/M button



If you're shooting a subject that doesn't move, then you need to use the single focusing mode.

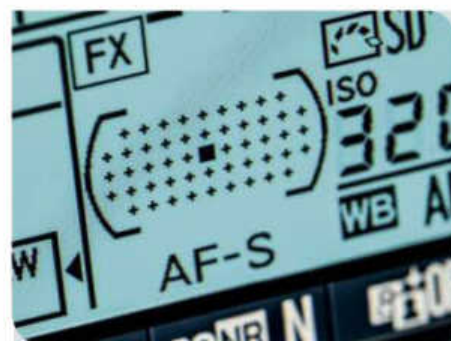
next to the lens mount does the same thing. Press this and rotate the command dial to switch the autofocus settings to AF-S. Once again the selected mode will be shown on any of the display screens.

With the Single focusing mode selected, you then need to choose your active AF point. This is the area of the frame that'll be held sharpest. Most cameras allow the active AF point to be

### “SELECT YOUR ACTIVE AF POINT TO DETERMINE THE AREA HELD SHARPEST”

adjusted by moving it with the D-Pad on the rear of the camera. You want it to rest over the key point of interest, so this becomes the sharpest part of your shot.

With portraits, it's best to place the active AF point over your subject's nearest eye. With this done, half-press the shutter to set the focus. You'll notice the active AF point flash red in the viewfinder, and your camera will beep. You're now ready to shoot. Don't release the half pressure on the shutter – just fully depress it to capture the frame, then zoom in on screen to check the results for sharpness.



### Understanding AF points

More advanced cameras have better and faster AF systems, and offer more AF points to choose from. Entry-level models usually have around 10 AF points, whereas pro-level cameras tend to offer around 50 AF points. There are two different types of AF point found in DSLRs: cross-type and vertical sensors.

Cross-type sensors are more accurate when it comes to establishing focus, as they work in two planes to assess the information in the scene. Vertical sensors operate on a single plane, so have less data to work with and tend to be slightly slower and less accurate. Cameras with more cross-type sensors are usually better at focusing.

## Taking full control using Manual Focus and Live View

Sometimes you'll want to take full control over the focusing and set it manually. It might be that you need absolute precision, or perhaps your camera's AF is struggling to lock on to its target. Setting manual focus is easy, but it takes more time than using autofocus, so it's best suited to still-life shots, or those where timing isn't crucial.

All you need to do is set the switch on the lens to the M (or MF) position and you're now in complete control. To adjust the focus,

simply rotate the focusing ring on your lens until your subject appears sharp.

For a more accurate view, it's best to use Live View if your camera has it, rather than using the viewfinder. With Live View enabled, you can zoom in by using the magnification buttons – just like with a captured image – for a close-up view of the subject. Once again, rotate the focus ring until maximum sharpness is achieved, then take the shot.



Switch to Live View and get a closer view of your subject when you're setting the focus manually.

### What to do if you're having problems with autofocus

Sometimes you'll notice your camera's autofocus system go 'hunting'. This is where it struggles to establish sharp focus, and so rocks back and forth as it searches for sharp edges. It might eventually get there, or it might not! This mostly happens when you're either trying to focus on a detail



which lacks contrast, or there's not enough light on your subject. In these cases, the camera doesn't have enough information to set a good focus.

When there's not enough light, your camera may fire up its AF-assist lamp. This projects a narrow beam of light (sometimes red) in an attempt to illuminate the subject and find

focus. If light isn't the issue, then chances are you're attempting to set the focus on an area that lacks contrast. Trying to focus on solid colours often results in hunting, so instead focus on something at the same distance that has an easily identifiable edge.

If your camera's AF system still isn't playing ball, the final option is to switch to Manual Focus mode and adjust the focusing ring until you get the sharpness where you want it.



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## How to focus on fast moving action

Getting sharply focused shots of moving subjects is easy. Follow these steps to capture all the detail of the action every time you shoot



### 1 Switch to your camera's continuous focusing mode

In order for your camera's autofocus system to be able to keep pace with the action, you'll need to switch the AF mode to its continuous setting. On a Nikon DSLR, hold the AF select button situated near the lens mount, and rotate the sub-command dial until AF-C appears on screen. If you're using a Canon model, you'll need to use the Ai Servo mode by pressing the AF drive button and scrolling the top command dial. Other manufacturers do vary, so check your manual to set the Continuous AF mode.



### 2 Select the central AF point

In order to avoid cropping your subject accidentally, it's best to use the central AF point. This gives you a bit more leeway with framing, and you can always crop your picture afterwards to suit. What's more, the central AF point usually employs the more accurate cross-type sensor – even on entry-level DSLRs. This gives greater speed and precision with your focusing. On a Canon, press the AF area select button and rotate the Quick Control dial until the central AF point is selected. If you're using a Nikon, press the D-Pad to move the active AF point to the middle of the viewfinder.



BEN DAVIS

### 3 Focus and shoot!

Frame up on your subject so that the central AF point falls over the subject you want to be held sharpest. Half-press the shutter button and your camera will start to focus. It will continue focusing on the subject for as long as you maintain the half pressure, and will make adjustments to keep the subject sharp as it moves. Follow your subject in the viewfinder, so that it remains under the central AF point at all times, and then when you're ready, fully depress the shutter to take the shot.

Some more advanced cameras offer a 3D Tracking mode. This will keep the focus locked on your subject even if it strays from under the central AF point, and an adjacent AF point will pick up the job of focusing as it moves across the middle of your frame. This provides more flexibility with focusing, and allows you to pay extra attention to your composition, without having to worry about keeping the subject too central.





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CREATE YOUR OWN

# TRIPOD SLING

Effortlessly carry your set of sticks with some knot-tying know-how

TECHNIQUES & PICS BY DAN MOLD

It's 7am and you're walking to your favourite location to shoot *the* perfect sunrise. Your backpack is loaded to the brim with lenses and filters you probably don't need, while the tripod lashed to one side is causing it to sag and wear unevenly. The rhythmical tap-tapping of the tripod hitting the back of your leg isn't helping matters either.

You get there and the sun suddenly soaks the misty landscape with strong majestic rays. But in the struggle to unclip your rucksack and wrestle the tripod off your bag in a dazed slumber, the sun retreats behind a cloud. You've missed the picture-perfect moment.

How to comfortably carry a tripod is a common problem. The most hardened grab the legs by the bare metal, or balance it over a shoulder to set it up

faster. Others use a tripod bag or tie it to a rucksack, but this makes it slower to set up. There's a happy medium between the two, combining comfort and agility, but, it comes from an unlikely source.

Rated to 22kN, a 240cm climbing sling can support the heaviest of legs. Attach this to your sticks and wear it over a shoulder to travel with minimal kit. It's quick to access too, so you'll never miss the moment again.

If you don't own one, a sling will set you back around £10-15 – that's around half the price of a tripod bag. But unlike a bag, a sling works with tripods and monopods of all shapes and sizes, though, you'll need to apply some boy-scout knot-tying to attach it safely. Read on to see how and become the master of the clove hitch!



## YOU WILL NEED

- 1x 240cm rock climbing sling
- 1x tripod or monopod

**Time needed:**  
2 mins

## Four steps to making your tripod sling



### 1 Create a loop in your sling

Unravel the sling in front of you so there are no twists, kinks or knots in it and hold a section with both hands at about a shoulder's distance apart. Create a loop (or 'eye' as it's called in the knot-tying community) by grabbing the sling with your right hand and moving it over to your left. Then hold the eye in place with your left hand and move your right hand back to shoulder length distance again.



### 2 Make another eye to go under the first

Grab the sling in your right hand and move it over towards your left to create another eye and hold this in place with your right hand. You'll now have two eyes – one in each hand. You need to move the eye in your right hand so that it sits underneath the one in your left. Then hold the base of both eyes with your left hand to keep it in place. Pick up your tripod, with the legs fully closed together, in your right hand.





## Carrying your tripod sling

### Over the shoulder

If you need to get up and go, this is the method to use as it's comfortable for a long carry and will even snuggle alongside a backpack.



### Under the shoulder

A quick adjustment to the method above, just pop the sling over your shoulder and then let the tripod swing under your arm. This is handy if the feet of your tripod are dirty and you don't want them touching your back. A hand on the sling will stop it swaying.



### Across the back

If you're not using a backpack but carrying your tripod a fair distance, going head first through the sling to wear it across your back spreads the load a little more evenly.



## 3 Lash the loops between the leg locks

With the two eyes overlapping you need to manoeuvre the double loop over the tripod feet and some of the leg locks. The most secure place to tighten the knot is between the leg locks. You can adjust the loops a little to make the hole bigger if it's too snug. When the knot is in position the rest of the sling that isn't tied will form a large loop. Grab this loop firmly and give it a quick tug to cinch the knot firmly around the legs.



## 4 Secure the other end to the top

The centre column beneath the head is an ideal place to secure the other end of the sling. Loop it over the head and make sure it catches on the column. You can add an extra loop here if needed, but gravity will keep it in place when you're carrying it. When you need to use the tripod, just loosen off the clove hitch around the legs. You can then double the sling and place it over your head to hang from your shoulder while you shoot.



Using fallen leaves as props will inject a great sense of energy and interest to portraits.

# FALL FOR AN AUTUMN PORTRAIT

TECHNIQUE & PIC BY MATTY GRAHAM

**W**ith the colours turned and leaves on the ground, the close of autumn creates a magical natural adventure playground. This means there's plenty of photo opportunities for the young, and the young at heart. Right now, it's just the right time to shoot a fun portrait of your kids, grandkids or any other member of the family who loves messing around with the abundance of seasonal props shed by the trees.

By asking your subject to grab a big pile of leaves

and throw them in the air as you fire off a picture, the frame comes alive and will be full of sparkling energy that brings an extra level of interest to your autumnal portrait.

No fancy kit is needed to achieve a fantastic image – just your camera, a willing model and, of course, a good pile of leaves!

Your local park or nature reserve is a great location to try this shot, but if you have enough leaves in your back garden, you won't even need to leave home.





## How to shoot a fun leafy portrait in minutes



### 1 Set up your location

While you may be tempted to start shooting as soon as you arrive at the park, a little scouting will pay dividends. Look for an area of shade so that no ugly shadows fall on your subject's face. Assemble a big pile of leaves so your model has enough to throw in the air frame after frame. Lastly, watch out for distractions or litter in the background as this will save you the task of cloning it out later.



### 2 Dial in the settings

Select Aperture priority, which is A or Av on the main mode dial. This mode will allow you to control the depth-of-field in the scene while the camera selects an appropriate shutter speed to deliver a well-exposed shot. Dial in a small f/number such as f/4, or f/2.8 if your lens will allow it. Such an aperture will keep your subject sharp, but will throw your background into an attractive blur.



### 3 Get the timing spot on

Ask your model to throw a pile of leaves in the air as you focus on their eyes and take a shot. Review it on the back of the camera and make sure there is no blur on your subject's face. If there is, simply increase the ISO setting and reshoot. It may take a few attempts to capture an image where the leaves aren't obscuring the subject's face, but keep shooting and you'll be rewarded after a few takes.

## EXPERT TIP Add a pop of flash for attractive catchlights

To add extra sparkle to your portrait, introduce some fill-in flash. This will help avoid any shadows on your subject's face and produce catchlights in their eyes. Press the flash button to pop-up your built-in flash, and take a test shot. If the flash effect is too strong, adjust the Flash Exposure Compensation via the Menu screen or by holding the flash button and turning the command dial to -1.0.





# WHY THIS SHOT WORKS



Discover what makes Navid Baraty's shape-filled architectural shot such an appealing image

WORDS BY MATTY GRAHAM



## A Use of diagonal lines

While this scene is full of lines, there are some that work harder than others. Navid's squared-up composition has made the most of the diagonal lines running through the frame. These are the lines that add energy to the picture and help the viewer's eye scan from left to right and back again, taking in the detail of the photo.

## B Going high for different perspective

If you were to walk down this street, you probably wouldn't have picked it out as a photo opportunity. But by shooting from a high vantage point, the whole scene changes. The lines of the street, almost invisible at normal eye level, slice up the scene to create abstract shapes. In a single frame Navid has included squares, circles and rectangles, and even the zebra crossing takes on a graphical transformation.

## C Presence of human interest

Architectural images can sometimes run the risk of appearing soulless. By introducing people (complete with their umbrellas), Navid has not only brought an element of human interest to the shot, but has also added a sense of scale to the scene.

## D Considerate colour mix

With a lot of architectural photography, subjects are often made of glass or steel, so it can be hard to introduce any colour, let alone a wide range of different hues. With careful composition, Navid has captured greens, oranges, yellows, whites and blues in this shot. This adds extra vitality in a multi-coloured scene without unbalancing the frame.

### What was used

Camera Nikon D700 & 135mm f/2 lens

Exposure 1/1600sec @ f/2, ISO 640

Software Photoshop Visit [navidbaraty.com](http://navidbaraty.com)





By shooting from above, an ordinary street scene is transformed into an abstract frame full of intriguing shapes.





3 EXPERTS

1 EVERYDAY SUBJECT

# TAKE A TREE TO A NEW PLACE

Tackle our creative challenge today!

**F**rom time to time, it's natural for photographers to fall into a rut with their image-taking. This may be because they tend to shoot the same type of subjects, visit the same locations or take all their pictures at the same time of day with similar light.

If any of this sounds familiar, then you need to take action to jump-start your shooting. A great way of achieving this is to take on our *Out of the Ordinary* challenge. The proposition is simple – each month, three of the *Digital Photo* team are given an everyday object to shoot – something that they'd normally pass by on the search for a more worthy subject. Then, with the brief set, it's

entirely up to them to bring their creativity to the front to create a picture that's more than the sum of its parts. They can use as much or as little imaging work as they like – all that's important is to make a great image.

With the inspiration from our experts still ringing in your ears, it's then over to you to put your own spin on the ideas they've used, or go a step further and create your own image from scratch.

Be sure to keep in mind that you don't need rucksacks full of fancy gear to capture creative images. Working with what you have will be enough to let your ideas come to life – the only limitations are your imagination!

## THE SUBJECT

Any tree you like...



## OUR THREE PHOTOGRAPHERS

The team share their creative approach to making pics



**Shot 1**  
**Andy looks for** interesting shapes in natural objects



**Shot 2**  
**Matty plays** with pixels to transform the big into the small



**Shot 3**  
**Dan fits** a filter to create a glowing infrared look



## Andy discovers



I used to live in Japan, so when this month's theme was announced as 'tree' my mind immediately went to bonsai. But I rarely go for my default idea, as this doesn't stretch your thinking.

There's a shapely tree in a field near my house. It's a rare instance of a tree standing alone, without any other trees or buildings around it. I'd already taken a number of shots in different weather and lighting conditions, and I realised that it was the perfect subject for a spot of 'Photoshop topiary'. As there was plenty of sky around the tree, I knew I'd be able to use the Clone Stamp tool to mould it into any shape I wanted.

I opened the shot in Photoshop and duplicated the Background Layer with Ctrl+J. I never make alterations to that Layer, so I can always compare my work with the original image. I also created a blank new Layer above





Andy's shot is a surreal exaggeration of the human brain's ability to find shapes in natural objects.

## the pastime of “Photoshop Topiary”

the duplicate and used the Pen tool to draw the shape of an elephant on that new Layer. When the shape looked right, I right-clicked on it and selected Make Selection. Now I had a Selection in the shape of an elephant. I selected the duplicate Layer below it and hit Ctrl+J again. This created a duplicate of the tree below, but the tree was now in the shape of an elephant!

I now had my elephant tree, but the rest of the Layer was transparent, so I needed some sky behind it.

I clicked on the Layer with the sky intact – the one below the

elephant tree – and selected the Clone Stamp tool. By Alt+clicking to sample areas of sky on the same horizontal level, I was then able to release Alt and paint out the tree and leaves by cloning more sky into the shot.

The elephant-shaped tree was on the Layer above, so the more sky I cloned in, the more visible the elephant shape became. When I'd finished, the edge was a little too hard, so I used a leaf-shaped brush to clone some leaves back in, breaking up the harsh outline. Finally, I added some Vibrance and Contrast to bring out the golden hour colours and add some extra impact.



**I USED A LEAF-SHAPED BRUSH TO CLONE SOME LEAVES IN AROUND THE EDGE**



Andy used an Olympus CSC camera and a 7mm lens to get this shot of a lone tree in a field.

### Lessons learned

When I started I thought that getting the tree to take on the shape of an elephant would be the hardest part, but in practice that part was quick and simple. The real trick was in cloning leaves back in to the edge of the shape to break it up. If the outline is too hard, the image looks really fake. I had to strike a balance between making the edge look ragged enough to be realistic, without making the shape unrecognisable.



## Matty sends a message in a bottle

SHOT  
2

I love image-editing, but the majority of my pixel pushing is spent in Lightroom, perfecting landscapes and portraits once I've returned from the field. For this challenge, I turned my usual workflow on its head and used the power of Photoshop to create a fantasy image. The inspiration came from one of our talented readers. Adrian Limani created a tree inside a lightbulb that featured in *Your Pictures* (Nov 2015 issue). This got me thinking about placing this month's theme, a tree, into a corked bottle – a bark-covered message in a bottle. To create the image, I first needed a tree. Given the time of year, it wasn't long before I found a contender. It was stripped bare of leaves, but this would prove to be an advantage when it came to the image-editing. The only other image I needed to piece this composite together was the glass jar, which I topped with a cork and shot on an empty shelf. Both these images were captured in Aperture priority mode, with the aperture set to f/8 for maximum sharpness and quality.

With the pair of images open in Elements, adding the tree to the jar in two steps proved the most successful method. I used the Lasso tool to select the grassy foreground, which I then copied and pasted onto the jar image before using the Free Transform command to place it in position. Then, adding a Layer Mask, I painted into it with a black brush to

### DELICATE PIXEL-BASED TREE SURGERY TRIMMED BACK BRANCHES

paint out the Layer around the jar until it fitted neatly in position. I then used the Magic Wand to select the skeleton of the tree. Because it was in silhouette, the tool easily selected all of the branches and I then repeated the process of copying and pasting before using Free Transform to scale the tree's cutout to fit the jar. Then, adding another Layer Mask, I carried out some delicate pixel-based tree surgery, trimming any protruding branches. The effect looked a little too artificial at this point, so I merged the grassy base and tree Layers together and then changed the Layer Blending Mode from Normal to Color Burn. This allowed some of the pixels from the jar Layer to seep through and give the impression my tree was actually within the glass container.



Matty cut out his tree and placed it inside a glass jar to give a great effect.



The Magic Wand tool made it easy to select all the branches of the tree with just one click.

### Lessons learned

By splitting the original tree shot into two (the grassy base and the trunk/branches), it proved much easier to make Selections and then copy and paste the cutouts into my jar image. Once they were scaled down and combined, I found that experimenting with Layer Blending Modes provided the key to achieving a convincing result. Color Burn proved the best option for this image.





Infrared light bounces off the greenery but not the blue sky to create a high-contrast mono picture.

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Attaching an infrared filter means that only invisible IR rays can get through to your sensor.

## Dan takes an infrared route

SHOT  
3

Black & white is a card I've been keeping up my sleeve for just the right *Out of the Ordinary* subject.

To make my mono shot as striking as possible, I wanted to try to capture invisible infrared (IR) light rays. Trees are perfect for IR because their green leaves reflect lots of IR light, so appear white, while the blue in the sky reflects very little and appears totally dark. This means you get a much stronger degree of contrast in the shot than with regular pictures.

Modern cameras have an IR-cut filter to desensitise the imaging chip to these light rays. Specialist companies can remove this filter to convert it into an IR camera. But I wanted to take a more affordable route that didn't involve a permanent modification. Budget Near Infrared (NIR) filters come in wavelengths ranging from 720 to 950nm. The higher the number, the stronger the effect – but the stronger the filter, the longer your exposure time will need to be. I opted for a 950nm

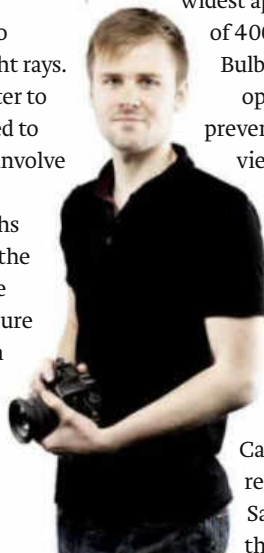
model as I rather quite like the long exposure effect – it's a bit like using a 10-stop ND filter.

I went to a local park and framed up on a lone tree I'd spotted before. With the camera on a tripod, I focused on the tree, then switched to Manual Focus mode to lock the focus in place. With this done, I then carefully screwed the IR filter onto my lens.

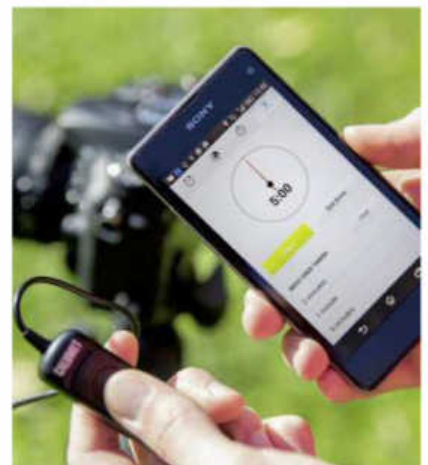
The next step was to put my camera into its Manual exposure mode, open the lens to its widest aperture of f/2.8, and set an ISO

of 400. I set the shutter speed to Bulb so I could keep the shutter open as long as I wanted. To prevent light leaks I covered the viewfinder eyepiece, and to

prevent camera-shake I plugged in my remote shutter cable. I set a timer on my phone to 4mins and took the first shot. The results were too dark, so I increased the ISO to 800 and extended the shutter time to 5mins. In Camera Raw, all I had to do was remove the colour with the Saturation slider and then give the Contrast a boost.



**AN IR FILTER CREATES A LONG EXPOSURE EFFECT A BIT LIKE A 10-STOP ND**



To get enough infrared light for a well-exposed image you need to use a remote shutter release cable, your camera's Bulb mode and take a shot for several minutes.

### Lessons learned

You can't see through an infrared filter, so it's important to compose and focus your shot before attaching the filter to the lens. You also need to be careful not to move the camera or knock the focusing ring when screwing on your filter, especially if the front filter thread is integrated into the focus ring on your lens. With exposures several minutes long you want to get this right in the first couple of shots!





Ann's vision for this image was to make her subject's hair look like flames. The close crop is the result of using a 105mm macro lens.



“No obstacle  
can stop a woman  
that’s so in love  
with her work!”

# HEADSTRONG



Ann Nevreva’s  
stunning portraits  
are the product  
of true grit and  
determination.

We find out how the one-time  
lawyer became a self-taught  
portraiture perfectionist

WORDS BY MATTY GRAHAM

**P**hotography can be a battleground. While every shooter endures the usual struggles of acquiring gear, learning skills and making a name for themselves, some photographers have to fight harder. The additional hurdles of dismissive peers, adverse weather and remote locations tip the playing field to an unfair level, and making it as a pro becomes as much about grit, staying power and determination as having an eye for a great picture. True professionals take on these challenges and conquer their respective genres. These are the innovators, the masters of light who work to raise the bar of their chosen discipline, not just to land commissions or rack-up page views.



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Ann Nevreva is one photographer who has battled more than her fair share of challenges on her rapid scramble up the professional ladder. Based in Odessa, in the south of Ukraine, she trained as a lawyer before finding her true calling with a camera in her hand. “My biggest passion is portraiture,” explains Ann, who says she likes to work with natural light and female beauty. Although Ann bought first bought a camera to simply use around the house, she claims as soon as the finger clicked the shutter, a love affair was born. “I decided to see what the camera would bring to my life and I’ve never regretted trading in my career as a lawyer to become a photographer.”

Learning the art her own way, Ann absorbed knowledge from books, videos and a lot of practice. After four years, she’d gone from self-professed amateur to working pro, but there was only one genre Ann wanted be involved in. “I tried macro and wedding photography, but these experiences only reinforced the feeling that I’m only really happy when I work with female portraiture.

Flicking through Ann’s portfolio, it’s obvious she has crafted a unique signature style that runs deep like DNA in every one of her portraits. She believes this style combines a classic approach to portraiture, with extra emphasis on the model’s eyes plus the addition of wind to her frames. “The wind helps convey life and emotion.” On top of her capture work, Ann has a flawless approach to image-editing and by learning Photoshop to an advanced level, she elevates her portraits into genuine fine-art.

Despite her success, Ann has endured challenges beyond the camera. Portrait photography is arguably still dominated by men, and Ann says she has had to deal with the fact that men are biased in their judgement of her art and unduly critical of her work. “A lot of the photographers in the Ukraine started in the industry when the country was still part of the Soviet Union. They don’t accept times have changed and can’t understand how a woman can show the beauty of another woman,” explains Ann. “Men tend to show more sensuality and sexuality of a female model, while I will try to show the purity and tenderness of the subject.” Ann adds that in her experience, models will relax quicker in an all-female environment, making more of her time with them. Despite any sniping reservations from male counterparts, Ann confidently states that “no obstacle can stop a woman that’s so in love with her work”.

Ann’s portraits may owe some of their freshness to the different culture that exists in Odessa. She says the photography industry in the Ukraine is in its formative years and that shooters are now beginning to look West for influence rather than East.



**“I DECIDED TO SEE WHAT THE CAMERA WOULD BRING INTO MY LIFE AND I HAVEN’T REGRETTED IT”**



**Top** An aperture of f/2.8 helped Ann create a shallow depth-of-field to help her model stand out against the background.

**Above** Attention to detail is key to her model’s styling and in this image, Ann wet the model’s hair to add drama.

**Left** Ann uses contrasting colours to add impact, such as red and green.



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"In the Ukraine photographers are mainly thought of as wedding shooters, rather than portraiture artists. This leads to the opinion that the quantity of images you receive from a pro is more important than the quality."

Regardless of influences, a great portrait is still a great portrait, and Ann has a firm grasp of the elements that create one. "It's hard to describe, but the moment is the most important thing," she explains. "You could have a beautiful model and a great camera, but that's not enough for a successful portrait. You need a moment of emotion and it can take time to get this from your subject."

As a professional, Ann takes her photoshoot process seriously. Before a lens cap is taken off, she spends time picking the right model. Next, consideration is given to the location – will it look great as a backdrop and is there plenty of natural light? Then Ann moves on to the styling for the shoot and organises assistants if necessary. Ann prefers to shoot in the warm glow of sunset light, often backlighting her models to create a rim-light effect around their hair and outline. But golden light is seldom guaranteed. "The weather is always my biggest challenge," says Ann. "I've been pretty unlucky in the past and encountered day after day of rain or heavy cloud." The unfavourable weather has even led to Ann changing the approach to a photoshoot, switching to a more sheltered location, but what is a constant is her minimalist approach to kit. Working with a Nikon D800 body (with a D700 as back-up), Ann's favourite lens is the Nikkor 105mm f/2.8G macro, which she alternates with her Nikkor 50mm f/1.4G optic. The rest of Ann's kit bag consists of a reflector and a bright red step-ladder to shoot from higher angles. "The ladder is the one accessory I never leave home without," says Ann. "I'm on the short side and the models I work with are tall. My friends joke that they never see me without this red ladder and that it has become a part of me!"

Though Ann's photoshoots are meticulously planned, when you're working with models in the outdoors, there's always something that can and will go wrong. "I had one session that was rained off three times in a row. On the fourth attempt I thought we'd finally get the shot, but then as soon as the lens cap came off, the heavens opened. Foiled again!"

To help her shoots work so efficiently, Ann ropes in the skills of an assistant – one who doesn't have much of a choice on the matter. "I'm lucky as my husband also assists me on location. There's so many non-creative things to be done on a shoot and an assistant allows the photographer to focus on the imagery."

While the assistant helps keep the shoot rolling, it's up to Ann to get the best poses out of her models, a skill that seems like second nature. Ann explains that unless you are working with professional models, it's



**Right** Locations are a key element of Ann's images. This arch not only framed the model, but also placed her in more subtle light in the shade.

## "THE WEATHER IS ALWAYS MY BIGGEST CHALLENGE AND I'VE BEEN UNLUCKY WITH PHOTOSHOOTS"



**Above** A well-placed reflector help create attractive catchlights in this model's eyes.

**Left** Ann's subjects often have direct eye-contact with the lens so they connect fully with the viewer.



## QUICKFIRE QUESTIONS

### Q Where do you find the inspiration for your photoshoots?

Natural beauty and music always inspire me. But sometimes I can find the inspiration in unexpected places or things. I am always open to new ways of inspiration, but I don't try to do something special to be inspired.

### Q What would your advice be to those who would like to follow in your footsteps and be successful in portrait photography?

It is really easy to get successful results in this area if you are ready to work hard, constantly learn and improve your skills. And you mustn't be afraid to try something new, and experiment with the light and the colours. The main thing is not to think about photography as only work – everything has to come from the heart.

### Q You have a very unique, fine-art style. How would you describe it and what do you do to help your images stand out from the crowd?

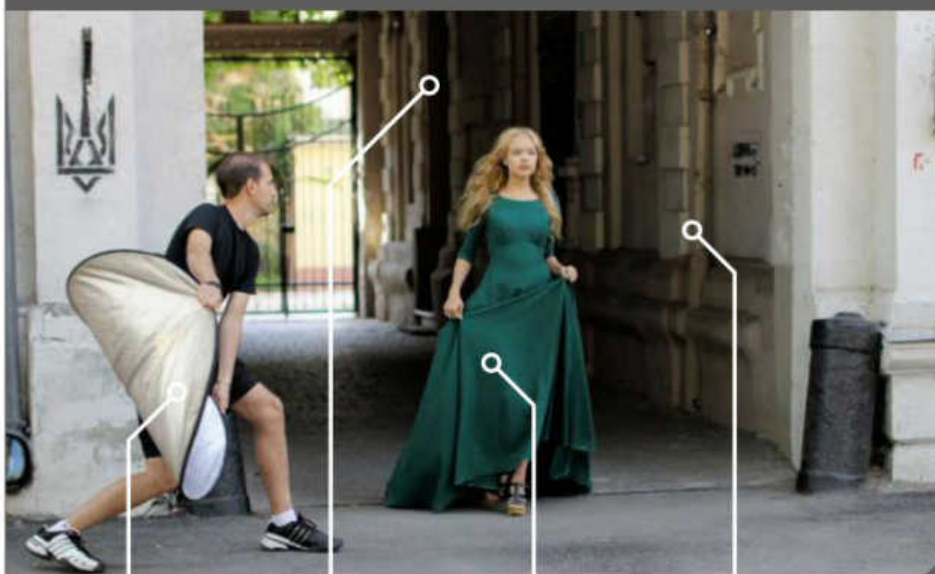
I think it's a combination of a classic portrait and art photography, where the main focus is on the eyes of the model.

likely you will have to instruct the subject on how to pose correctly. This means showing how to tilt the head to the right angles, but also communicating what expression you'd like them to pull as well. Ann keeps talking to her models throughout the shoot, continually directing their poses and encouraging the subject by keeping the atmosphere on the shoot light and jokey. As she works solely with female models, Ann doesn't get lost in the physical details that male photographers may over-analyse. "It doesn't matter how tall they are or the colour of their eyes. I want a pure look and someone with personality." But photoshoots are only half the story to this artist's talents. Ann is also a Photoshop expert and runs online one-to-one Skype tutorials with other photographers who want to learn her pixel-perfecting secrets. The post-processing workflow starts in Lightroom as Ann organises and rates her images before making global changes to exposure and contrast. The pixel pushing steps up at gear when Ann then opens files in Photoshop,

where she retouches her subject's skin using her favoured technique of working the Dodge & Burn tools. Next it's onto a vital component of portrait editing that many overlook – colour-grading. "To colour grade the image, I use a four-step process," explains Ann. "I start with RGB Curves to add the contrast to my photos but also work with the individual Green and Blue channels to add additional colour." Next, Ann uses a Color Balance Adjustment Layer to warm up or cool down the scene with real precision. The third tool she employs is a Selective Color Adjustment Layer, as this enables her to work with colours separately, making them brighter, darker or even changing them to a different hue altogether. The fourth step in Ann's colour-grading is a Hue/Saturation Adjustment Layer. "In the Master channel, I'll get the general Saturation level right, before selecting specific colours and boosting their Saturation further." Ann's final editing process is to adjust the sharpness. While there are many ways to achieve this in Photoshop, Ann favours the

## "PRAISE IS GREAT, BUT I'M A HARSH SELF-CRITIC AND I'M ALWAYS STRIVING TO DO BETTER"

### How Ann creates her amazing portraits



#### Reflector

A collapsible reflector is a key element in Ann's images, bouncing natural light back onto the model.

#### Assistant

Not only can they hold kit, assistants are a second pair of eyes, looking out for fly-away hair or other details.

#### Location

Picking a location with a darker backdrop helps the model's features stand out more in the lighter foreground.

#### Styling

Selecting a wardrobe that fits the scene is vital. Matching clothing colours to environments is an important consideration.

Smart Sharpen command. This allows a high level of control over the sharpening in the frame, and she can even choose to add the sharpening effect to the shadows or the highlights in the scene. As a perfectionist, Ann will regularly work on a single image for several hours to make sure the results match her high standards.

This attention to detail has won Ann an army of fans. Her page on [500px.com](http://500px.com) has been viewed a massive eight million times, so what's it like to receive such amazing feedback? "For a self-taught photographer, it's a big compliment to hear such positive critique of my images. But I'm a harsh self-critic and always strive to do better."

As the portfolio grows and her online Photoshop tutorials gather pace, Ann is aiming high in terms of her future goals. And her plans may add a new edge to the crafted signature style she has worked so hard perfecting. "I've always worked with natural light, but I think I will soon start experimenting with flash. It would be a new challenge to work with light I can have more control over," she explains. "And if we're talking about dreams for the future, I would love to shoot for *Vogue* one day."

With such a potent mix of creativity, determination and Photoshop skills in her armoury, it won't be long before you see Ann's name in the hallowed pages of the top fashion magazines.





**Top** By positioning her subject with her back to the sun, the model's hair glows in the wind.

**EXCLUSIVE  
BEHIND  
THE SCENES  
VIEW**

**Step up**  
For an elevated shooting position, Ann breaks out her red stepladder – an accessory she claims she just couldn't live without!



**Briefing the model** It's Ann's job to explain to the model what she expects from the photoshoot. This not only includes the poses she would like them to adopt, but also the facial expressions, as this helps communicate the emotional angle of the image.



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# CREATE THE RETRO LOOK IN PHOTOSHOP

Discover how to give your pictures a vintage makeover in software using *Digital Photo's* brilliant step-by-step techniques!

From a cross-processed colour twist to a toned and textured lith print, adding an old-fashioned feel can introduce a nostalgic narrative to your shots. The analogue, degraded look of film has a real sense of authenticity about it, but with today's crisp, clean digital files, it's not something that can be created in-camera, or added with a wash of secret potions in the

darkroom. Instead, the vintage vibe is achieved through the use of image processing software. The most popular and well-known package for adding these effects is Adobe Photoshop, but there are different versions of it with different features and options (see panel on right). When you're new to image-editing, the interface of even the most accessible package can seem daunting, but with the Elements guide below, you'll soon get the hang of all the tools and features, and once you've learnt the basics, a whole new world of creative photography opens up!

## Learn by doing

Since 1997, *Digital Photo* has been helping photographers achieve their potential, and one

## PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS THE CORE FEATURES & FUNCTIONS

### TOOLBOX

This palette contains all the tools used to make changes. Click on a tool to select it, and further options will appear in the Tool Options bar.

### MENU BAR

Each item in the menu bar at the top gives access to a drop-down list of options. If our tutorials ask you to go to **File→Open** or **Window→Layers**, this is where you do it.

### VIEW TOOLS

Zoom in and out and scroll around the picture to work on small or large areas.

### SELECTION TOOLS

Select a specific area of a picture so it can be edited independently.

### ENHANCE TOOLS

Make changes to the pixels within a picture or a part you've selected.

### DRAW TOOLS

Paint, erase or add text to your image using these features.

### MODIFY TOOLS

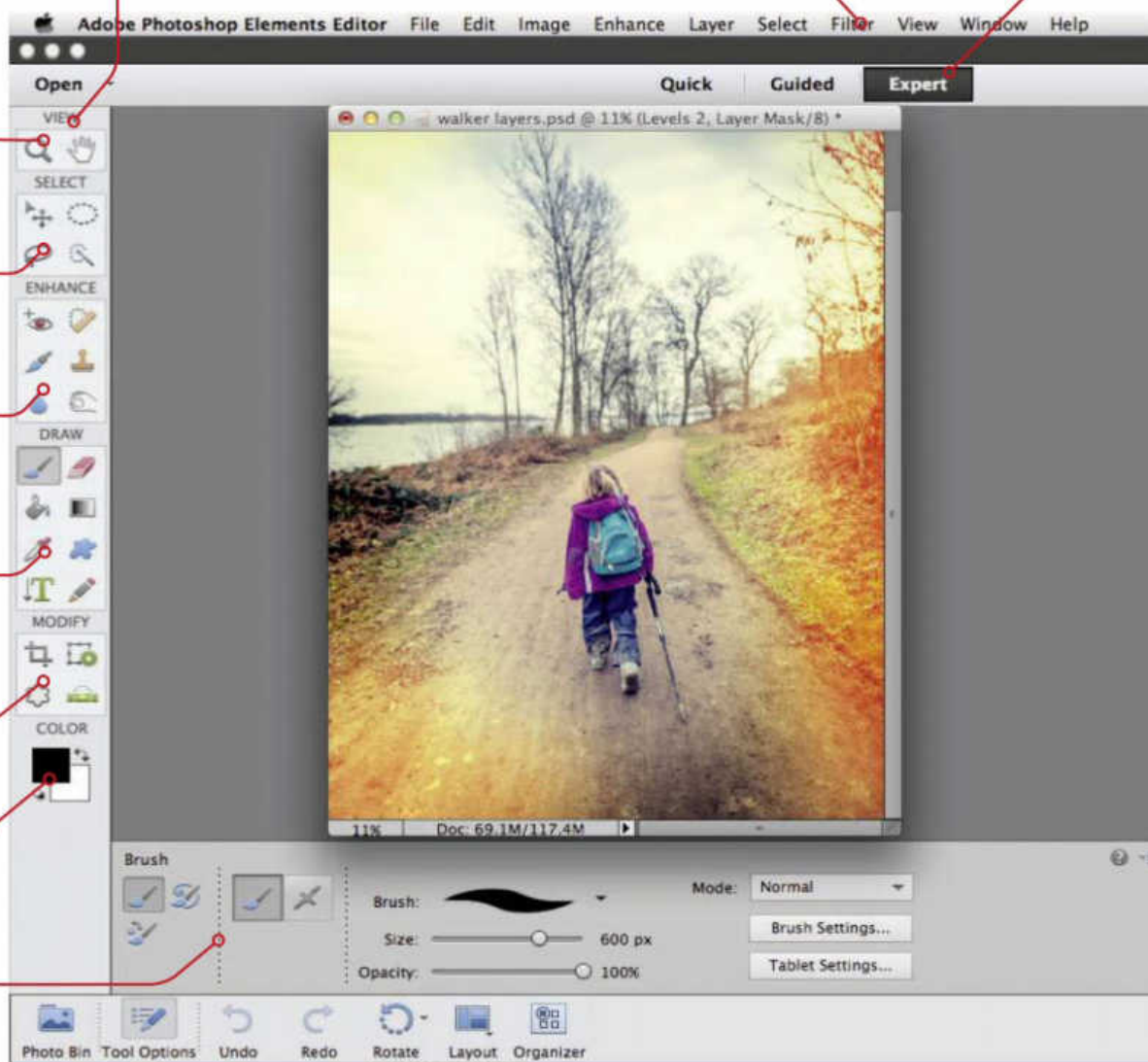
Crop or recompose to alter the size and shape of the entire picture.

### COLOR TOOLS

Choose the foreground and background colours that the tools will use.

### TOOL OPTIONS BAR

Set up the tool you've selected so it works in the way you want it to.





thing we've discovered is that people learn by *doing*. Our clear, step-by-step guides take you through the image-editing process, and the very pics used by our experts are supplied in the Start Images folder on the disc, so you can load them up and follow the exact-same technique in your own software.

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LESSONS

#### EXPERT MODE

Click on this to enter the most feature-rich display mode for all projects.

#### LAYERS PALETTE

One of the most important palettes for creative imaging work, this is a core feature of Elements and Photoshop.

#### CREATE A NEW LAYER

Click to make a blank Layer.

#### NEW ADJUSTMENT LAYER

Click to bring up a list of Adjustment Layer options, and choose the one you want.

#### TRASH

Get rid of unwanted Layers by dragging and dropping them on this icon.

#### LAYER OPACITY

A slider lets you fade a Layer between 0% (transparent) and 100% (fully opaque) to control how it appears.

#### BLENDING MODES

A drop-down list lets you select from a large number of choices to affect how the Layer interacts with the Layer below.

#### LAYER MASK

Hides or reveals part of the Layer to which it's attached.

#### LAYER NAME

Double-click here to give the Layer a new name.

#### LAYER THUMBNAIL

A small-scale image to help you identify the Layer's contents.

#### SHOW/HIDE LAYER

Switch Layers on and off so you can see their effect on the image.

#### PANEL OPTIONS

Layers is the default, though you can display other options, or customise your workspace under the More icon.

## Learn with DIGITAL PHOTO

### 1 Watch the video lesson

Load the disc, click on the video you want to watch, and our experts will walk you through.



### 2 Follow the steps

Open the start images into your software and follow the tutorial in the magazine.



### 3 Produce a pro image

Complete the project then use the technique you've learnt to enhance your own shots.



## Image-editing software options



### PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS 13 £60

Photoshop Elements is the stripped-down version of Photoshop targeted at enthusiasts. It offers the core features that photographers need and sports a similar interface to the professional Photoshop CC. Along with Layers, Layer Masks and a host of Selection tools, Elements offers a basic but effective version of Adobe Camera Raw for editing and enhancing RAW files.



### PHOTOSHOP CC £8.57 monthly

Photoshop CC (Creative Cloud) is the professional version of Photoshop. It's only available as a subscription, so you pay £8.57 monthly to use it. The deal includes Lightroom 6 so there's no need to buy this separately. As well as the tools in Elements, Photoshop offers Curves, the Pen tool, and Color Balance. It also features an advanced RAW converter, which shares the same RAW engine as Lightroom 6.



### LIGHTROOM 6 £104

Photoshop Lightroom is a RAW workflow package offering a pro-level RAW converter and image management features for cataloguing your shots. It shares the same RAW conversion functions as Photoshop CC, but has a different interface. Lightroom doesn't feature Layers for creating shots with multiple images, but many photographers who don't want to subscribe to Photoshop CC find a combination of the standalone Lightroom and Elements meets their needs. For more info on the above packages, visit [www.adobe.com/uk](http://www.adobe.com/uk)

## Opening pics into Photoshop

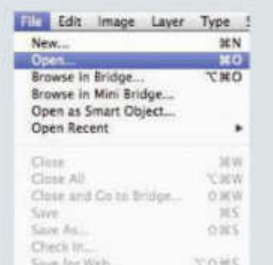
A card reader is the easiest way of transferring pics from your camera's card to a computer. Most PCs and Macs now have an SD card slot built in. Drag the pics from the card reader to a new folder you've created and named to copy them. Once copied, they can be opened...

1 Load Photoshop, then go to **File→Open** and navigate through your folders to find the pics. Click on the shot you want, then click on **Open**.

2 Open the folder with your pics in, and right-click (Ctrl+click on a Mac) on the file you want to open. From the options, select **Open With→Photoshop** (or **Elements**).

3 Open the folder with your pictures in, and drag and drop the shot you want onto the PS/PSE icon on your desktop.

4 Open your picture folder, then drag and drop the pic you want into the main workspace window in the Photoshop/Elements interface.





## At a glance

You'll learn How to add your shots to our free film rebates

You'll need Photoshop or Elements

Time required

5 minutes

Difficulty level

Easy

## On the disc

Video lessons

Watch as Jon runs through this entire technique on your computer screen.

Start image

The picture Jon used, plus your nine free film rebates can be found in the Start Images folder.

# ADD FILM REBATES FOR A CLASSIC LOOK



Take digital pictures back in time with an elegant and authentic film frame border

TECHNIQUE & PICS BY JON ADAMS

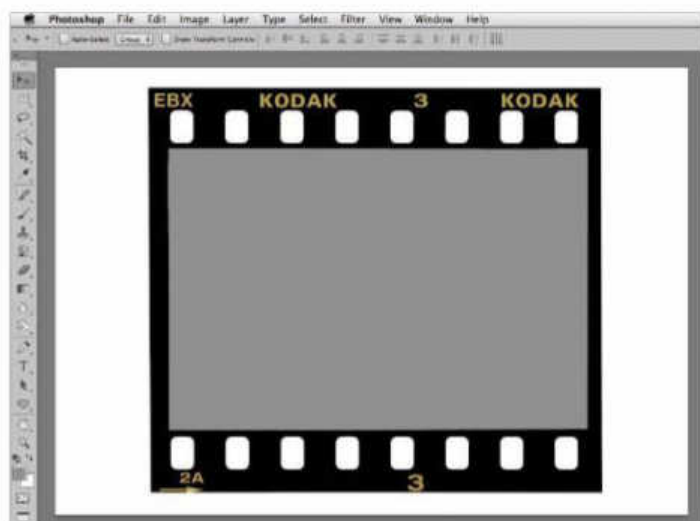
9 FREE FILM REBATES ON THE CD

The sprocket holes and unique edges of traditional film stocks will immediately transport your shots to a different era. Even better, when the edges are visible in an image, they'll double up as neat presentation frames, too. As part of the raft of goodies supplied with this month's issue (you'll find them all in the Start Images folder) we've provided high resolution scans of a selection of film types. These include 35mm, various medium format sizes and large format 5x4in frames. Adding your pictures to them is quick and easy in Photoshop or Elements, and all the film emulsions' edge markings remain in place for a really authentic look and feel.

You'll be surprised how the different rebates and aspect ratios of the film stocks affect the look of your pictures, so follow the step-by-step below, and take your latest digital captures on a trip back in time...



Taken on a 16-300mm lens at its longest zoom setting, this fun snap of a captive Little Owl takes on a more considered look when framed with a 35mm film rebate.



## 1 Open your picture & choose your film rebate

Choose a picture you want to add to one of the film frames, and open it into Photoshop or Elements. Once it's up on screen, make a note of its orientation (horizontal or vertical) and then go to **Select→All (Ctrl+A)**. Go to **Edit→Copy (Ctrl+C)** and your shot will be stored in your system memory. You can now safely close it down via **File→Close** (or use the shortcut **Ctrl+W**). Next, go to **File→Open**, and choose the template you want to use from the Film Rebates folder in the Start Images. In the example image, the 35mm rebate was selected. Click on **Open** and it'll appear on screen. If the rebate is in a different orientation to your image, go to **Image→Image Rotation→90° CW** in Photoshop, or **Image→Rotate→90° Right** in Elements.



## 2 Paste your pic into the template

To paste your picture into the same document, go to **Edit→Paste**, or hit **Ctrl+V**. The picture will appear over the template, obscuring it from view. To make it show through the central area, open your Layers panel (**Window→Layers**) and click where it says **Normal**. From the drop-down list of Blending Modes, select **Overlay**. This will make the grey area see-through, and reveal your image in the right area of the frame. Your pic may be too large, however, so zoom back with **Ctrl+Minus** to create some room, and then hit **Ctrl+T** to enter the **Free Transform** mode. A bounding box will appear around your picture.





### After

Adding your pic to one of the free film rebates gives a retro presentation frame and an instant trip down memory lane!



## 3 Resize your pic to fit and tidy up the edge

To make your shot to fit the rebate in Elements, tick **Constrain Proportions** in the Tool Options bar, then drag the corner handles to reduce its size. To do this in Photoshop, hold **Shift** while dragging a corner handle. You can also rotate the image by dragging outside the bounding box. Once your pic is nicely composed in the rebate's window, hit **Return** to set down the changes. If your image extends over the film's edge, it will interfere with the edge markings on some of the rebates. To prevent this, make sure the Layer with your picture on is active by clicking on it, and then select the **Eraser tool**. Adjust the brush size with the square brackets keys, and erase over the areas where the edge markings appear. To finish, go to **Layer→Flatten image** to crunch the Layers into one, then save your framed pic under a new name via **File→Save As**.

## + EXPERT TIP Using the film strips

When using the *Filmstrip.jpg* template, you have multiple frames to show a off a selection of shots in a lightbox-style format. The technique is exactly the same (select, copy, close, then paste in your picture) but after setting the **Overlay** Blending Mode, you'll need to resize each pic with **Free Transform** to fit the individual film frames.

As you add each new picture, the only thing to check is that your shots don't overlap each other on the template. To avoid this, either scale them to fit in the individual frames, or select the **Eraser tool** and rub out any areas that spill over the edge of the frame concerned. Always make sure you have the correct Layer active, though. The easiest way to check this is to switch the 'eye' icon on and off. Don't worry if you make a mistake during the process, as hitting **Ctrl+Z** will undo the last thing you did and take you back a step.



The *Filmstrip.jpg* template allows you to add multiple pictures to strips of 35mm film, giving you the chance to make an attractive, lightbox-style presentation of a related series of shots.



## At a glance

You'll learn

How to add a cross-processed effect and create the look of fogged film

You'll need

Photoshop or Elements

Time required  
10 minutes

## On the disc

Video lessons

Watch as Jon runs through this entire technique on your computer screen.

**Start Image** The pic *Independence.jpg* can be found in the Start Images folder, but you'll want to use your own shot to personalise the technique.

# ADD LIGHT LEAKS FOR VINTAGE CHARM



Inject the emotion of days gone by into your shots using these simple but powerful effects

TECHNIQUE & PICS BY JON ADAMS

Cross-processing was a rather unpredictable technique that involved processing negative film using chemicals designed for slides, or processing slides in chemicals intended for negatives. When it worked successfully, it gave the resulting picture a boost in contrast along with a completely different colour palette. Unfortunately, when unsuccessful, it just ruined the film completely!

Light leaks were seldom intentional, but occurred because the camera's film chamber wasn't properly sealed, or had accidentally been opened before the

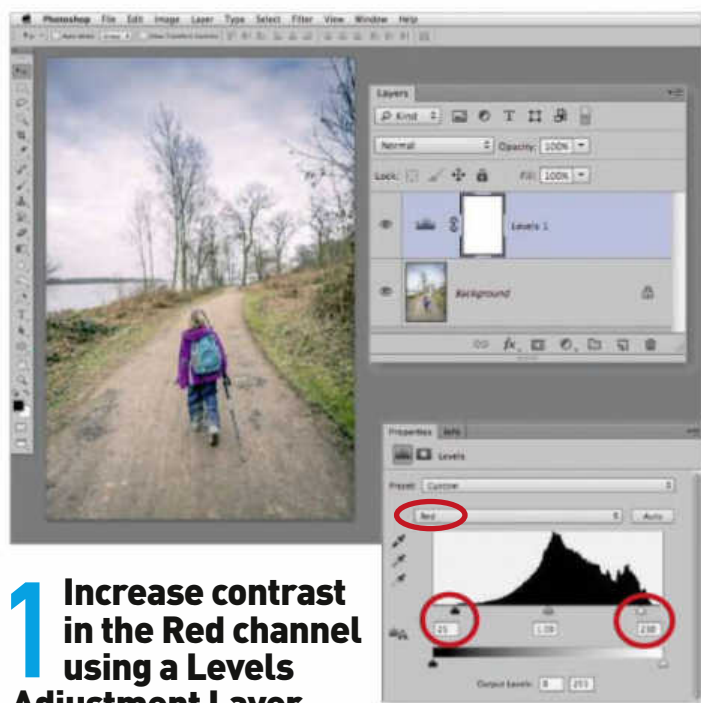
film was safely rewound back into its canister. Both these old-school effects have a distinctive look that's extremely popular, and in this step-by-step, we reveal how you can create them to turn back the clock add a nostalgic atmosphere. What's more, you can control the look so your cross-processed colours and contrast are perfectly suited to your image, and your light leaks occur exactly where you want them.

Give these easy techniques a try with the supplied start image, then apply them to your own pics to create an authentic vintage look.



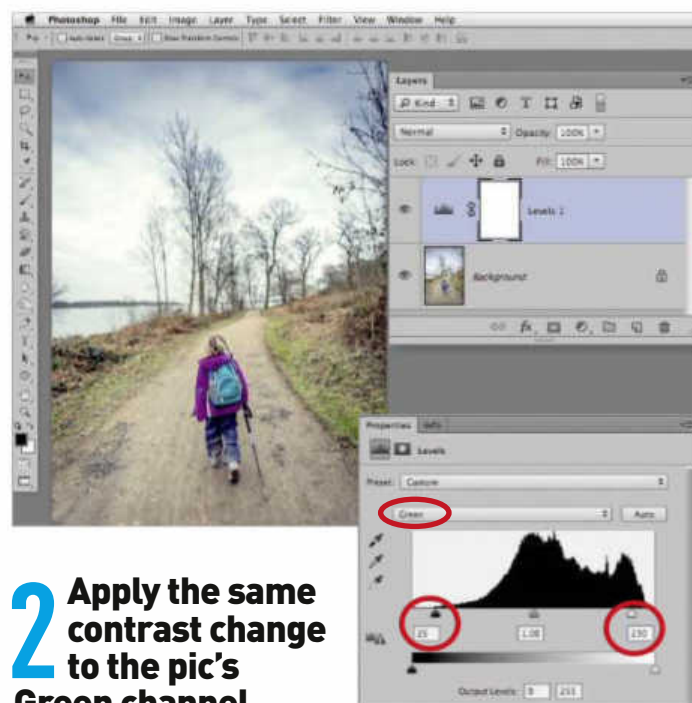
Before

The shot of a child setting out on her own is nostalgic, and adding retro effects will boost the emotional content.



## 1 Increase contrast in the Red channel using a Levels Adjustment Layer

Open the picture you want to age and distress into Photoshop or Elements, or use *Independence.jpg* from the Start Images folder. Once it's on screen, open the Layers panel (**Window→Layers**) and click on the Adjustment Layer icon (the half black/half white circle). From the drop-down list, choose Levels. In the palette, click where it says **RGB** and select the **Red** Channel. Move the Shadows and Highlights sliders under the Histogram inwards to values of around **25** and **230** respectively.



## 2 Apply the same contrast change to the pic's Green channel

Still in the Levels adjustments palette, click where it now says **Red** and select the **Green** Channel. Make the same changes as you did with the Red channel, moving the Shadows and Highlights sliders inwards to settings of **25** and **230**. These two adjustments boost the contrast in the Red and Green colours within the image, changing the colour palette, but to give an authentic cross-processed look, you need to compensate for this boost using the Blue Channel in a slightly different way.



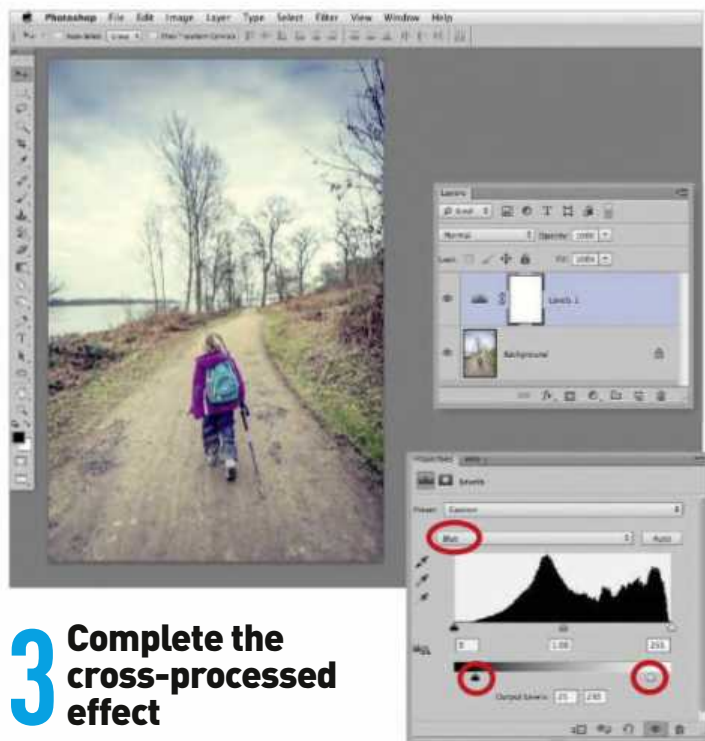
## AGE COLOURS & ADD LIGHT LEAKS

### After

The vintage colour palette and fogged film effect around the edges adds an extra level of nostalgia to the scene.

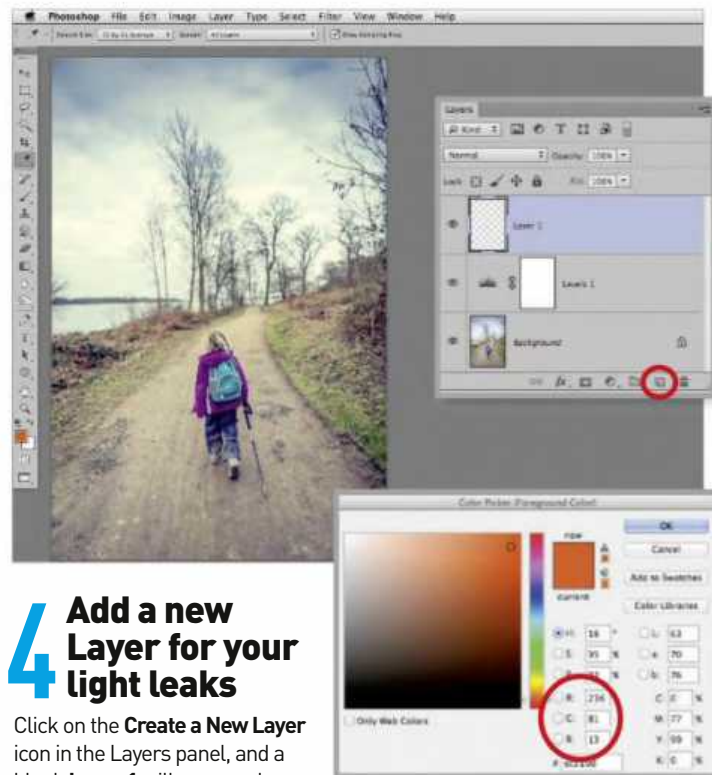






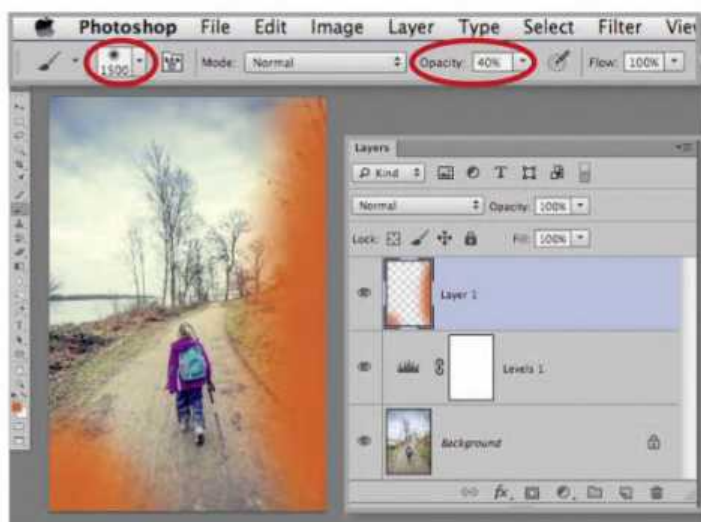
## 3 Complete the cross-processed effect

Click on **Green** and select the **Blue** Channel, and this time, instead of adjusting the Input Levels Shadows and Highlights sliders, you're going to change the Output Levels sliders beneath. These are rarely used, as they reduce the contrast, but that's exactly what's needed in this case. Move the Shadows and Highlights sliders in the Output Levels to settings of **25** and **230**. With these changes made the colour balance is altered to give the look of cross-processed film. Switch the Adjustment Layer's 'eye' icon off and on to see the difference.



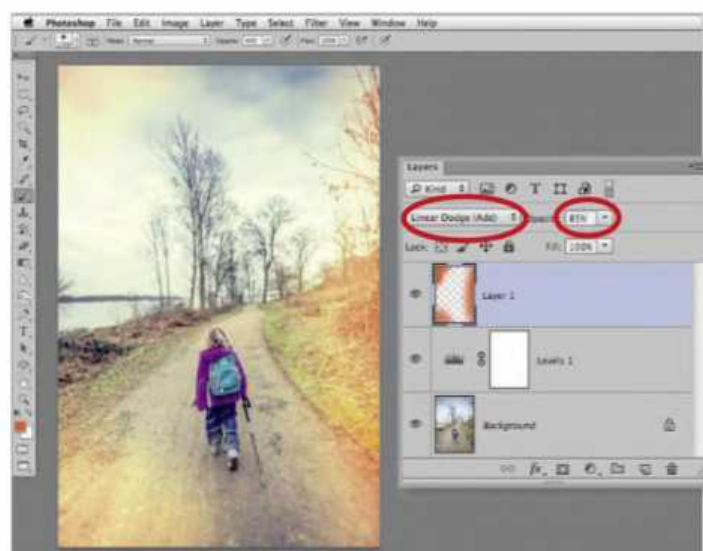
## 4 Add a new Layer for your light leaks

Click on the **Create a New Layer** icon in the Layers panel, and a blank **Layer 1** will appear above your Levels Adjustment Layer. To set a colour for the light leaks, click on the foreground colour swatch in the Toolbox, and the Color Picker will appear. Move the main slider to the area between red and orange and then click towards the top right of the preview window to select the actual colour. If you want to use the exact colour used in the example image, enter RGB values of **R:236, G:81, and B:13**. Click **OK** to import this as the foreground colour.



## 5 Paint on your light leaks with a large brush

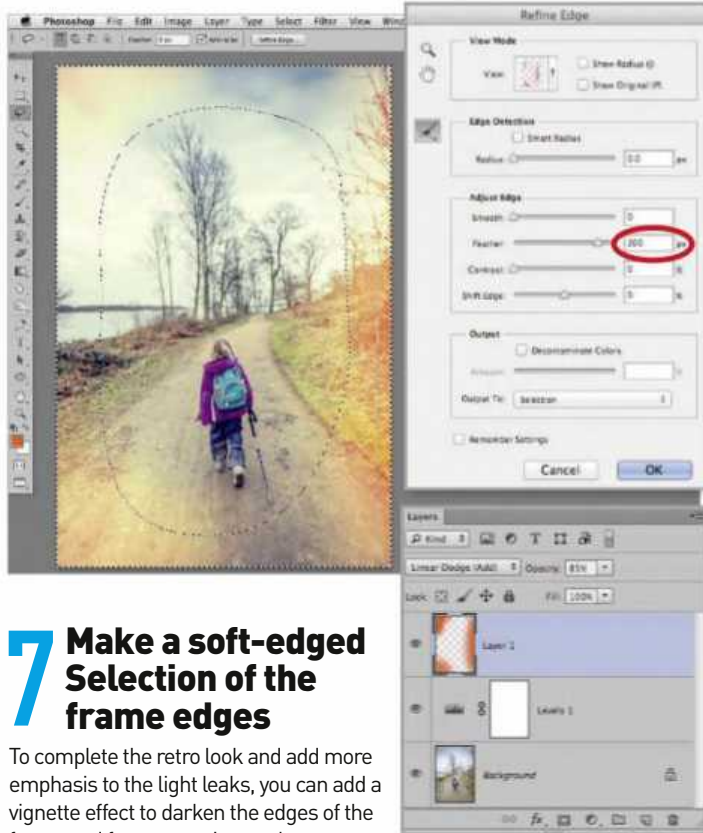
Now select the **Brush tool**, and go to the Tool Options bar. You'll find this at the tip of the screen on Photoshop, and at the bottom of the interface in Elements. Pick a soft round brush from the Brush Preset Picker, then reduce the **Opacity** of the brush to **40%**. To increase the size of your brush, move the **Size** slider in the Tool Options or even better – tap the right square bracket key to take it up to **1500px**. Now paint onto the edges of the image where you want your light leaks to appear. Build up the effect with successive strokes so it achieves full thickness at the very edge of the frame, and feathers out a little where it encroaches on the image.



## 6 Refine the light leaks by changing the Layer Blending Mode

To turn the blobs of red paint into light leaks, click where it says **Normal** in the Layers panel and select the **Linear Dodge (Add)** Blending Mode. This will allow your image to show through the paint, and will add a yellowish tinge to the light leaks. If the effect is too strong, reduce the **Opacity** of your light leaks Layer to around **85%** by moving the slider in the Layers panel. If you wish to add any more light leaks, you can paint directly onto the image, creating the effect as you go in this new Layer. If you overdo the effect, you can remove the leaks using the **Eraser tool**.

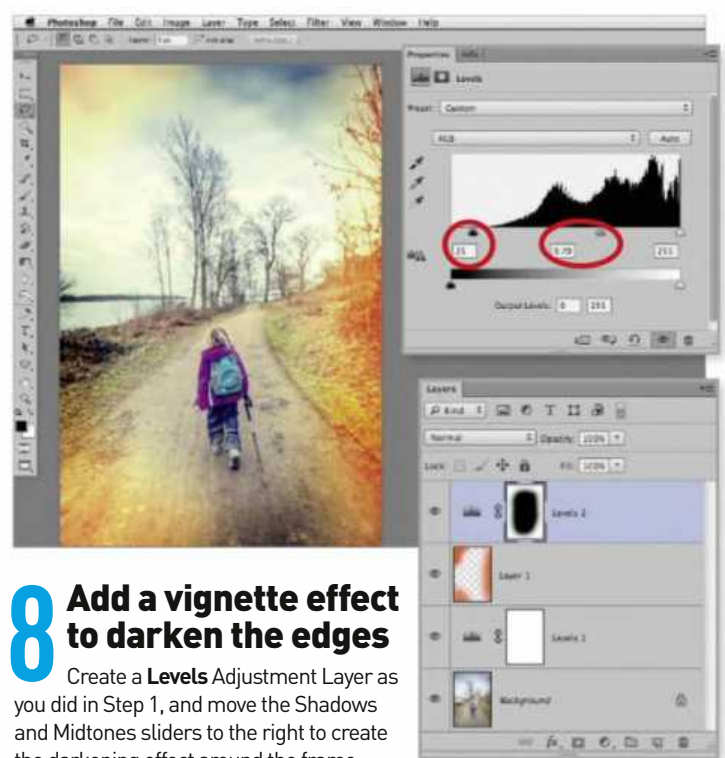




## 7 Make a soft-edged Selection of the frame edges

To complete the retro look and add more emphasis to the light leaks, you can add a vignette effect to darken the edges of the frame and focus attention on the centre.

To do this, select the **Lasso tool** and make a rough, ragged oval-shaped Selection inside the frame, leaving a good-sized margin. Hit **Ctrl+Shift+I** to get the outer part selected, then click the **Refine Edge** button in the Tool Options bar and set the **Feather** slider to **200px** to soften the edge.



## 8 Add a vignette effect to darken the edges

Create a **Levels** Adjustment Layer as you did in Step 1, and move the **Shadows** and **Midtones** sliders to the right to create the darkening effect around the frame edges. You want the effect to be subtle, so don't push the sliders too far. On the example image, the **Shadows** and **Midtones** sliders were set to **25** and **0.70** respectively. With the vignette added, the effect is complete, but because you've used separate Layers for all the changes, you can still adjust the overall look by clicking on the appropriate Layer and editing it further. To finish, go to **File→Save As** and save the image as a **Photoshop PSD** file. This will preserve all the Layers if you want to adjust them in the future.

## + EXPERT TIP Cross-process your pics using Curves in Photoshop

Users of the full version of Photoshop can introduce more extreme cross-processing effects by employing **Curves** instead of **Levels**. Curves is related to Levels, but offers more control and allows you to reshape the tone curve of the image by bending it into shape. You can do this to adjust contrast by using curves in RGB mode, but just like Levels, you can also adjust the settings of the Red, Green and Blue Channels independently.

Once you've opened your image, create an Adjustment Layer and choose **Curves** from the list. In the dialogue box, click where it says **RGB** and choose the **Red** Channel. Click on the diagonal line, pulling it down 25% of the way along, and pushing it up 75% along. This will create a shallow 'S' curve. Now select the **Green** Channel, and create the same shape, before selecting the **Blue** Channel. This time, push the curve up at 25% and pull it down at 75%, so you have a reversed 'S' curve.

This will give a great cross-processed effect, and clicking back to the **RGB** setting will show the tone curves for all three colour channels at once.



The **Curves** command in Photoshop controls contrast and colour and is a versatile option for creating cross-processed effects. Just like Levels, Curves can be used as an Adjustment Layer, and you can change the colour balance of an image by selecting the individual Red, Green or Blue Channels from the RGB box.



## At a glance

You'll learn How to create a classic lith print effect on any picture

You'll need Photoshop or Elements

Time required 10 minutes  
Difficulty level Easy

## On the disc

### Video lessons

Watch as Gavin runs through this entire technique on your computer screen.

### Start image

The picture Gavin used – *Lith-Beach.jpg* – can be found in the Start Images folder on the disc.

# INJECT MOOD WITH A LITH PRINT EFFECT



Take your digital pictures on a journey and recreate the look of a darkroom gem from yesteryear

TECHNIQUE & PICS BY GAVIN HOEV

In the traditional darkroom, lith printing was a wonderful technique for producing unique mono images. Part of its appeal was how accessible it was, as you could make a lith print with standard photo papers. But its charm also came from the rather random nature of the chemical process, as this resulted in no two lith prints ever being exactly the same.

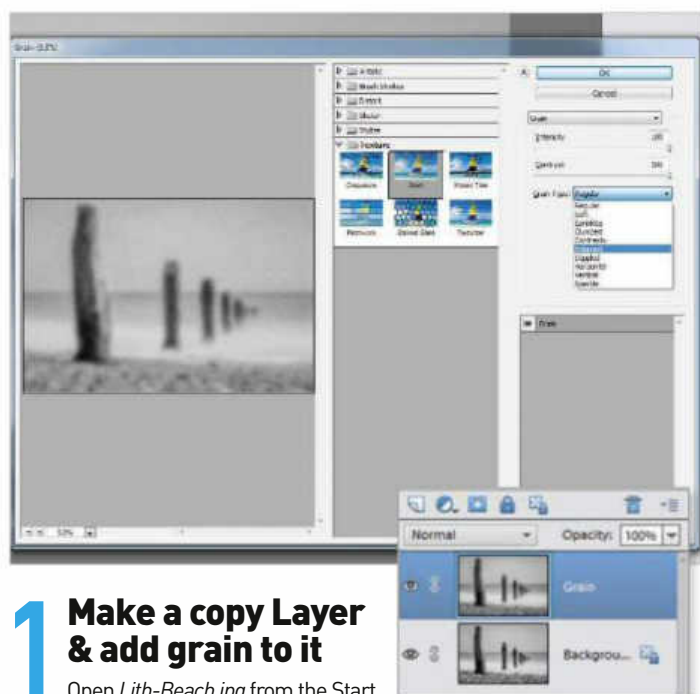
The shadow areas of a lith print would often be deep and dark with plenty of contrast across the rest of the image. Lith prints would almost always have a colour tint too, although exactly which colour you'd get was never certain.

With modern digital processing, what you see is what you get, so things are a lot less random. But many of the characteristics of lith prints can be recreated quickly and easily. This lith effect works really well on landscapes, seascapes and cityscapes. What you're looking for is a starting photo that has really strong shapes and a good range of tones, so avoid anything with lots of black or whites. Any photos with big skies are great too, as you'll really get to see the enhanced grain texture in the final photo.

## Before

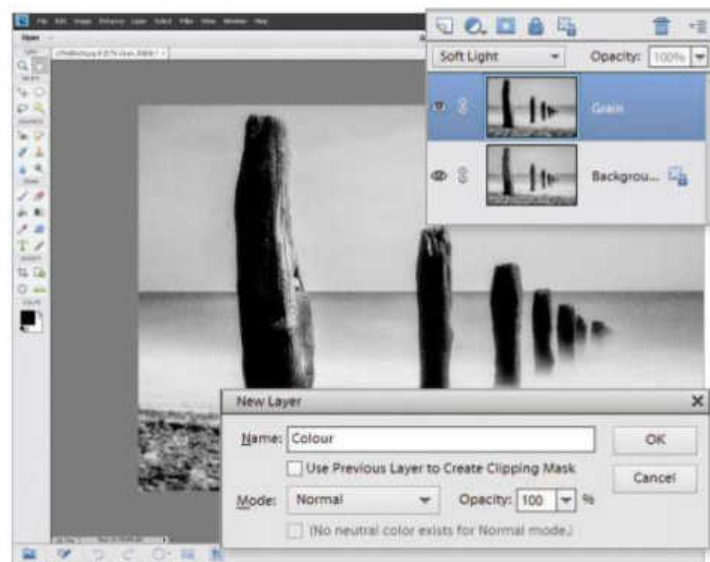


Our long exposure of sea defences is as modern as it gets, but by applying a lith style treatment in Photoshop, the mood and character will be enhanced.



## 1 Make a copy Layer & add grain to it

Open *Lith-Beach.jpg* from the Start Images folder or use a photo of your own. Remove the colour by pressing **Ctrl+Shift+U**. You'll need to make a copy of the **Background** Layer so press **Ctrl+Alt+J**. Name this Layer *Grain* and then click **OK**. This new Layer is going to give the photo both grain and contrast, but first you need to blur it, so go to **Filter→Blur→Gaussian Blur**. Set a value of around **40px** and then click **OK**. Next, you can add the grainy texture by going to **Filter→Filter Gallery→Texture→Grain**. Move both the **Intensity** and **Contrast** values to **100**, then set the grain type to **Enlarged** and click **OK**.



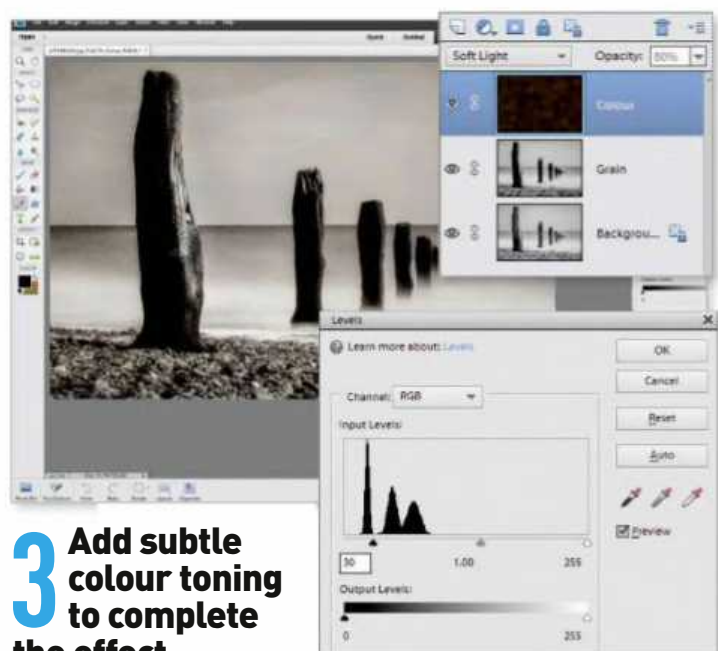
## 2 Desaturate the Grain Layer & blend it with the picture

Look closely at the image and you'll see the grainy effect is actually lots of coloured dots. To remove the colour press **Ctrl+Shift+U** and then go back to **Filter→Blur→Gaussian Blur**. This time use just **1px** and click **OK**. By changing the Layer Blending Mode from **Normal** to **Soft Light** you'll blend the blurry Layer with the original and increase the contrast. **Overlay** Blending Mode can also be used for even more contrast if you wish. For some colour toning press **Shift+Ctrl+N**, call the Layer *Colour* and click **OK**. Press **D** to set the foreground colour to black and then click the background colour. Use the colour picker to find a brownish colour and click **OK**.



## After

The deep shadows and grainy texture of a lith print have been added to give a big dose of extra atmosphere.



## 3 Add subtle colour toning to complete the effect

The toning of the photo needs to be a little random, so go to **Filter→Render→Clouds** and then **Filter→Blur→Gaussian Blur** once again. This time, use around **130px** and click **OK**. Set the Blending Mode to **Soft Light** and then lower the **Opacity** to around **80%**. To randomise the colour still further, press **Ctrl+L** to open **Levels**, then set the Shadows slider anywhere between **0** and **80**. A setting of **30** is a good place to start. Finally go to **Layer→New Adjustment Layer→Levels**. Deepen the darkest areas by setting the Shadows slider to **10**, then lighten the image by adjusting the Midtones to **1.35** and the Highlights to **245**. Click **OK** and your lith effect will be complete.

## + BONUS VIDEO Add a custom border

While digital may not be able to reproduce the truly random nature of lith prints that came out of the darkroom, you can create a border effect that will always be utterly unique by making use of the photo itself. This rough and grungy edge effect perfectly complements the contrast and grain of the final photo and is really easy to create. You can catch the bonus video, which is completely free to watch on our website.

All you have to do is sign up to our *Technique of the Month Extra* mailing list online at [www.photoanswers.co.uk/extra](http://www.photoanswers.co.uk/extra). Register now, and you'll get a fantastic free video to boost your skills every single month, so you'll never be short of new digital techniques to try.



See how to darken the edges and create a unique, artistic border by signing up for our free bonus video at [www.photoanswers.co.uk/extra](http://www.photoanswers.co.uk/extra)



## At a glance

You'll learn How to use Layers to boost mood and contrast

You'll need

Photoshop or Elements

Time required

5 minutes

Difficulty level Easy

## On the disc

Video lessons

Watch as Dan runs through this entire technique on your computer screen.

**Start image** The picture Dan used for this project can be found in the Start Images folder. It's called *Portrait.jpg*.

# ADD DRAMA WITH BLEACH BYPASS



Subdue colours and increase the contrast of your pictures to enhance the mood and atmosphere

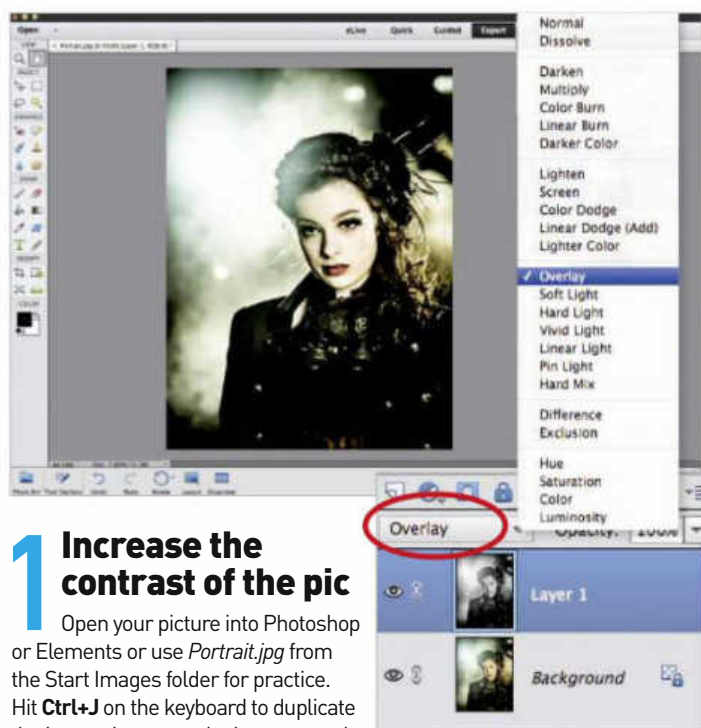
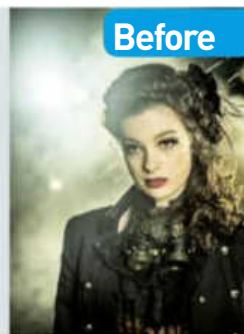
TECHNIQUE & PICS BY DAN MOLD

If you're a film buff, then the chances are you've probably seen the bleach bypass look many times before. The stylistic, high contrast effect, usually reserved for big screen blockbusters, gets its name from a process applied to cinematic film – where it misses out on the bleaching process altogether, therefore 'bypassing' it. This means the reel retains much more silver, and this boosts the contrast, mutes the colours and lifts the overall exposure of the film negatives.

The great news is, bleach bypass isn't restricted to cinema or analogue film – you can get the style in Photoshop or Elements with just a few clicks.

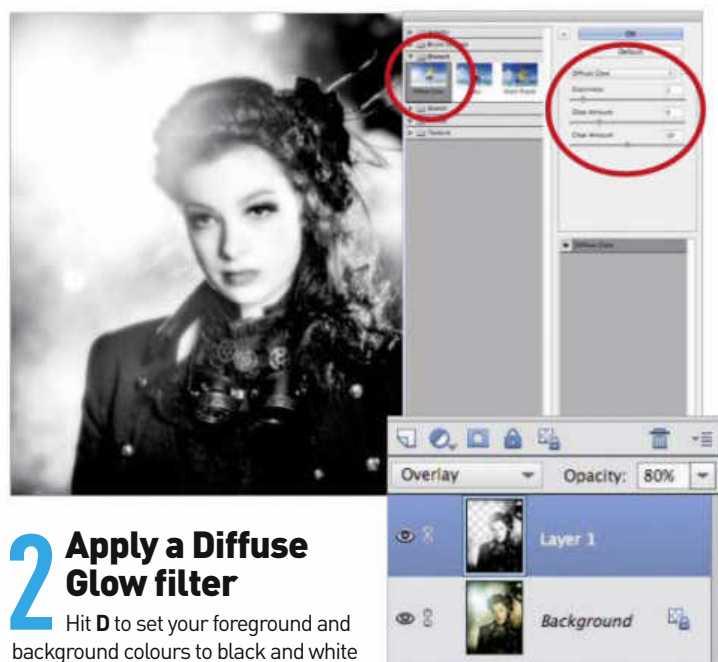
Follow this easy tutorial and learn how to boost contrast, use filter effects and add a vignette to your very own pictures to give them a little taste of Hollywood!

The *Portrait.jpg* start image was taken using an 85mm portrait lens to prevent the facial features from becoming distorted. An aperture of f/2 was used to blur the fog and lights behind the model.



## 1 Increase the contrast of the pic

Open your picture into Photoshop or Elements or use *Portrait.jpg* from the Start Images folder for practice. Hit **Ctrl+J** on the keyboard to duplicate the Layer, then go to the Layers panel (**Window→Layers**) and you'll see you have two identical Layers. You need to drain the current Layer of all its colour, so press **Ctrl+Shift+U** to quickly convert it to mono. To give the shot a real contrast boost, click on the box which currently says **Normal**. This is the **Blending Mode** and changing it alters the way this Layer interacts with the Layer beneath it. From the list that appears, chose **Overlay**, and you'll see an instant contrast increase.



## 2 Apply a Diffuse Glow filter

Hit **D** to set your foreground and background colours to black and white respectively. Now go to **Filter→Filter Gallery** and click on **Diffuse Glow** (you'll find it under the **Distort** tab). Set **Graininess** to **1**, **Glow Amount** to **5** and **Clear Amount** to **10**, then hit **OK** to apply the effect. To reduce the strength of the filter, go back to the Layers panel and drop the **Opacity** of your active Layer (**Layer 1**) until the picture looks good. A value between **60** and **80%** usually works well, but use your own judgement to match your image. If you want to keep some details but they've burnt out completely, click on the **Eraser tool** from the Toolbox, set the **Opacity** to **25%** and paint over the areas to bring them back.

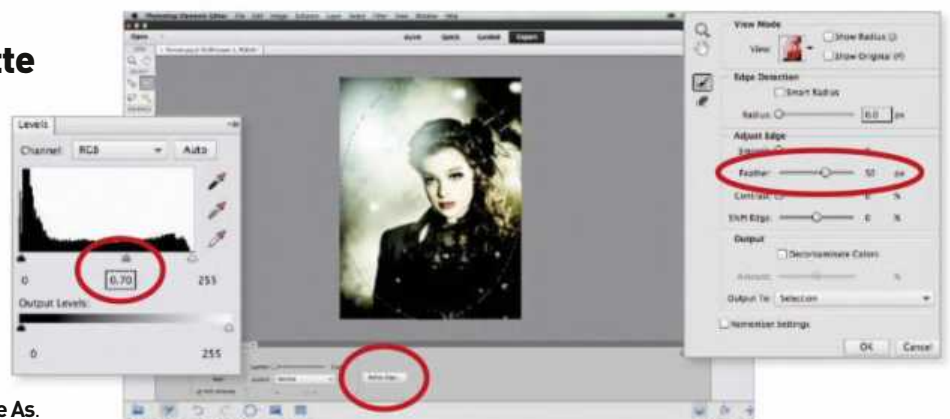


## After

A bleach bypass effect gives your shots loads of contrast and a cinematic feel.

## 3 Centre your shot with a vignette

To darken the edges of the frame click on the **Elliptical Marquee tool** from the Toolbox and draw a Selection from the top left of the shot to the bottom right. You want the inverse of this Selection, so hit **Ctrl+Shift+I** to get this. Now soften the Selection's edge by clicking on the **Refine Edge** button and setting the **Feather** value to **50px**. Hit **OK** to apply. Now click on the **Adjustment Layer** icon in the Layers panel and choose **Levels**. In the Levels palette, drag the middle Midtones slider to a value of **0.7** to darken the corners and hit **OK**. The last step is to go to **Layer→Flatten Image** and save the pic under a new file name via **File→Save As**.





# TRANSFORM YOUR PICS WITH JUST ONE CLICK!



Import our 50 free Lightroom Presets and discover how quick and easy it is to give your pics an in-vogue, vintage aesthetic

TECHNIQUE & PICS BY BEN DAVIS

**W**ant to give your pics a stylish retro look, but don't want to spend hours shifting sliders and tweaking tone curves? I guess you'd ideally want it to happen magically with just one click, and have 50 different options to choose from to boot. Well, with this month's *Digital Photo* Lightroom Preset giveaway, your prayers are answered!

Our Lightroom Presets are a collection of special settings that can be applied to any image instantly, giving it an immediate transformation. Using them is a fantastic time-saver as the bulk of the work is done for you, but if you want to step in to alter exposure or contrast, we'll show you how to do that too. Believe me – these presets will change the way you process your pics!

## At a glance

**You'll learn** How to import presets into Lightroom, use them to give your images a range of unique looks and make your own custom adjustments  
**You'll need** Lightroom 5/CC  
**Time required** 10 minutes  
**Difficulty level** Easy

## On the disc

**Video lessons** Watch as Ben runs through how to use these fantastic effects in Lightroom.  
**Start images** The free Lightroom preset pack can be found inside the Start Images folder. Look for the folder called *Retro Presets Pack*.



Periscope



Kozelek



Before

This photo was taken at a derelict farmhouse, somewhere in rural Mississippi. The lighting is rather flat, but as it's a RAW file there's plenty of image data to play with, so it's easy to create a wide range of differing dramatic looks in Lightroom.



Subterranean



## USE YOUR FREE LIGHTROOM PRESETS

### After

By using our free Lightroom presets, you can give your shot a wide range of radical new looks.

### Afterburn

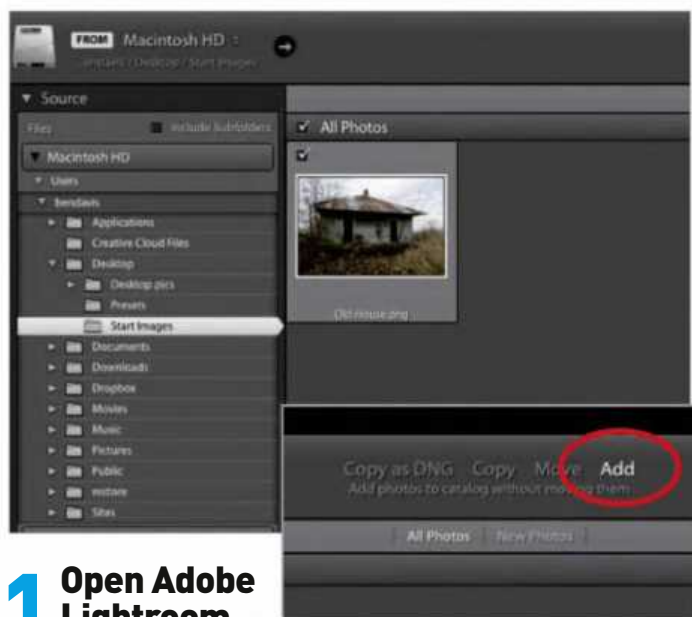


### Lemonworld



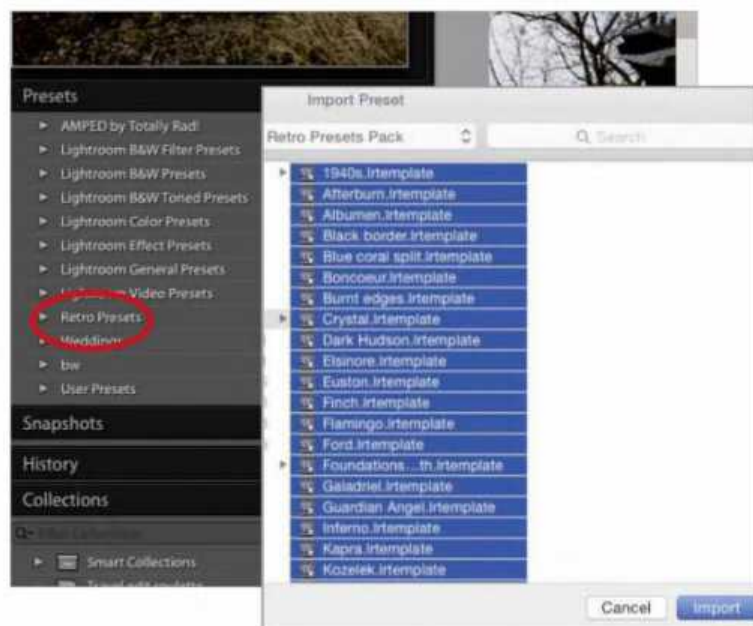
### Dark Hudson





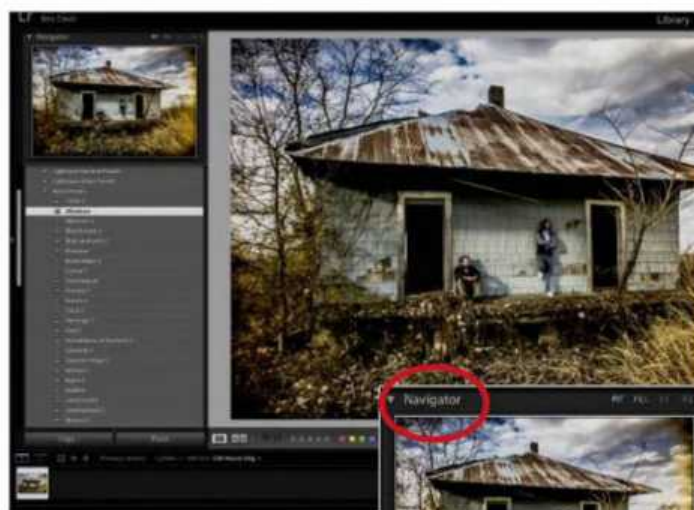
## 1 Open Adobe Lightroom and Import your chosen images

In order to use our free Retro Preset Pack, you'll need a copy of Lightroom. If you don't already have it installed, you can download a 30-day free trial by visiting [adobe.com/downloads](http://adobe.com/downloads) and creating an Adobe account. Once you've got Lightroom up and running, click on **Library** towards the top of the interface, and then click the **Import** button at the bottom left to begin adding images. Select the Source location of the pics you'd like to add. If you're using RAW files which are already in a folder on your computer, it's best to **Add** them to Lightroom. This will preserve your hard disk space and not create duplicate files, while keeping them in their original location. To use the example image, find *Old House.dng* in the Start Images folder. With your pics selected, click **Import** at the bottom right of the interface.



## 2 Add the Retro Preset Pack to Lightroom

With an image selected in the Library module, click on **Develop** at the top right to enter the Develop module. On the left hand side you'll find the Presets panel. Click on the little triangle next to Presets to expand the panel. Right-click anywhere in here and choose **New Folder** – then give it a name – something like Retro Presets will do! Then right-click on the newly created folder and select **Import**. Navigate to the **Start Images** folder on the disc or download and open the supplied **Retro Preset Pack** folder. Select them all by clicking on the first and last while holding the **Shift** key, and then click **Import**. They'll automatically be added to the Lightroom Preset folder that's buried within the application on your computer.



## 3 Preview the newly installed presets

It's easy to preview any of the presets without actually applying them to your image. Above the Presets panel you'll find the Navigator panel, with a large thumbnail of your selected image. Make this thumbnail as big as possible, by dragging the inner edge of the panel to its maximum expansion. Then simply hover your mouse – without clicking – over each of the individual retro presets. You'll notice that the thumbnail in the Navigator panel will preview what the image will look like, were the preset to be applied to the image.



## 4 Apply your chosen preset to your image with just one click

Having previewed the presets and decided which one you'd like to apply to your image, simply click on the name of the preset within the Presets panel to see it transformed. To compare the edited version with the original, you can toggle the effects on and off by pressing the **\** key. Pressing it once will display the pic as it was before any presets were applied, and you'll see the word **Before** appear in the top-right corner of the image. Press the **\** key again to return your image to its current edited state.





## 5 Make any adjustments to your image

You might find that after selecting your Preset you'll need to make minor adjustments to your image. This is because no other processing has been applied to the pic, and some other editing work may be required to get a good balance of tones. Go to the Basic tab on the right-hand side of the Develop module, and adjust any sliders to suit. It's most likely that you'd only ever need to touch the **Exposure**, **Contrast** or **White Balance** slider, as these will fix any major issues inherent in your original RAW file. The beauty of using one of the Presets is you're still able to adjust any of the editing controls, and can steer the pic in your chosen direction, using the Preset as a starting point.



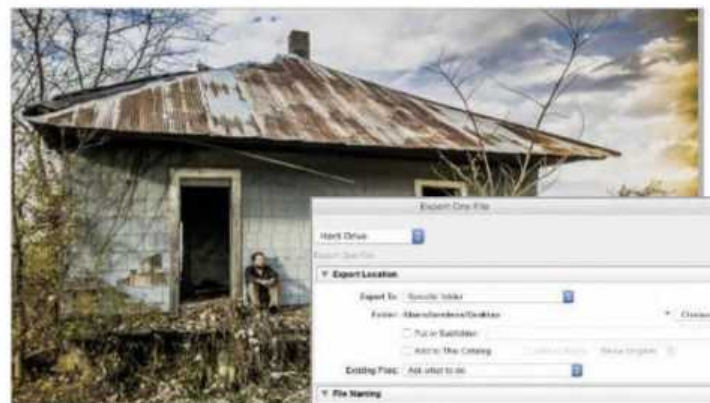
## 6 Adjust the Graduated filter

Some of the presets within the free pack contain the use of Graduated filters, which add localised adjustments to the image. To check if a Graduated filter is in use, select it from the Toolbar above the Basic tab, or press **M** on the keyboard for a shortcut. If one is present, you'll spot some 'pins' on the image. To adjust any of these, simply click on the pin to make it active, and you'll see three parallel lines appear. You can click and drag on these to adjust the position and feathering of the Graduated filter. When finished click **Done** to exit. Before trying another Preset, you must first clear the Graduated filter settings by pressing **Reset** at the bottom right of the Develop module.



## 7 Create a Snapshot

Below the Presets panel on the left-hand side, you'll find the **Snapshots** panel. A Snapshot allows you to record all of the settings at that particular time, so then if you make further edits you're unhappy with, you can instantly revert back to the look you liked. This is a fantastic tool if you want to try out some other ideas that take the pic in a different direction, because you won't lose the look you first settled on. To take a Snapshot, click on the **+** icon within the panel, give it a name and then hit **Create**. This will be forever stored in the Snapshots panel, allowing you to experiment on the image with the peace-of-mind that you won't undo your previous work.



## 8 Export your finished file as a JPEG

Once you've finished making adjustments to your image, you'll need to export it from Lightroom to create the finished version. This is because Lightroom never actually alters the original RAW, hence the need to create a new version.

To do this, go to **File→Export** to open the Export dialogue box. Choose the location of where you want your new file to be created; your Desktop is a good default location. Give the image a **Custom Name** so it's easily identifiable, and set the **Image Format** to **JPEG**. With the settings made, hit **Export** at the bottom right to create your new file.



## At a glance

You'll learn How to apply and create retro effects using Layer groups  
 You'll need Photoshop or Elements  
 Time required 10 minutes  
 Difficulty level Easy

## On the disc

**Video lessons**  
 Watch as Andy runs through this technique on your computer screen.  
**Start image**  
 Your free Retro Photo Effects pack can be found in the Start Images folder. It's called *Retro Photo Effects.psd.zip*

# RETRO PHOTO EFFECTS IN A SINGLE CLICK



With our amazing Retro Photo Effects pack, free this month, you'll be able to age and stylise your photos in a flash

TECHNIQUE & PICS BY ANDY HEATHER

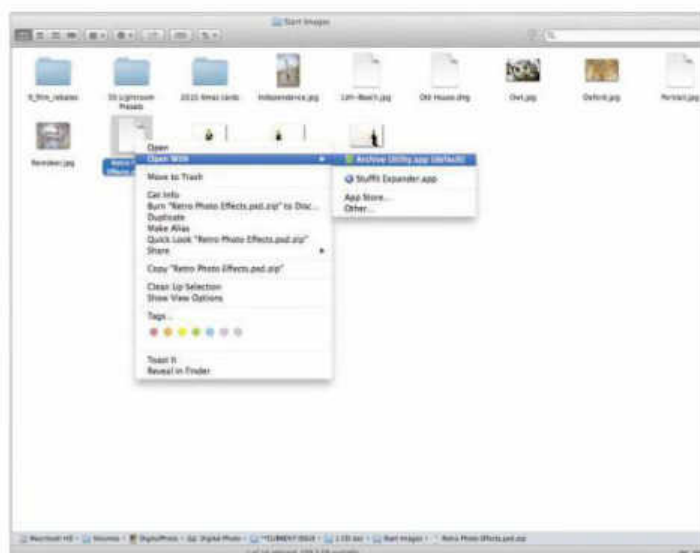
**FREE**  
 RETRO PHOTO  
 EFFECTS PACK  
 ON THE CD

With an ever-expanding selection of smartphone apps and photo editing programs on the market, it can sometimes be daunting to know how best to spend your cash if you want to easily add style to your shots. Well fear not, the answer is here: you needn't spend any money at all! Thanks to the team here at *Digital Photo*, you now have in your possession a Retro Photo Effects pack that's all ready to use for free. You'll find it in the Start Images folder and it's bulging at the seams with cool image transformations that will make your shots stand out from the crowd.

All the hard work has been done for you, so each of the effects can be applied in a single click. All you have to do is read on to find out how to open the pack and apply the effects to your shots. You can even combine several effects together to create a huge array of custom results! It really couldn't be easier and it'll work on a PC or a Mac, so dig out a shot that will benefit from a retro makeover, follow this simple step-by-step guide and you'll have an utterly transformed photo in a matter of moments.

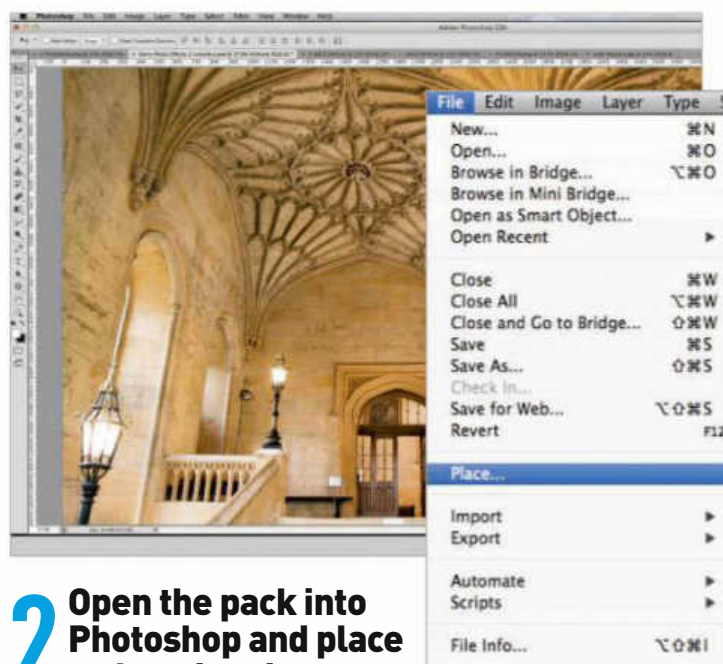


This shot was taken at Christ Church college in Oxford with a Samsung CSC. A focal length of 18mm was used, with an aperture of f/8 and a shutter speed of 1/30sec.



## 1 Unzip your free Retro Photo Effects pack and extract it to your hard drive

To open the Retro Photo Effects pack, go to the Start Images folder, and find *Retro Photo Effects.psd.zip*. This file has been zipped to keep it extra small, so it'll need to be unzipped. To do this, **right-click** on the Zip file and choose **Extract All**. Choose a location for the folder to be extracted into, such as your Desktop. Your Retro Photo Effects pack will then appear in the location you selected. To unzip it on a Mac, **right-click** on the file and select **Open With**, then choose **Archive Utility**. When your Mac has finished unzipping the file it'll open it in a Finder window to show you where it has been saved. By default, this will be within the *Downloads* folder.



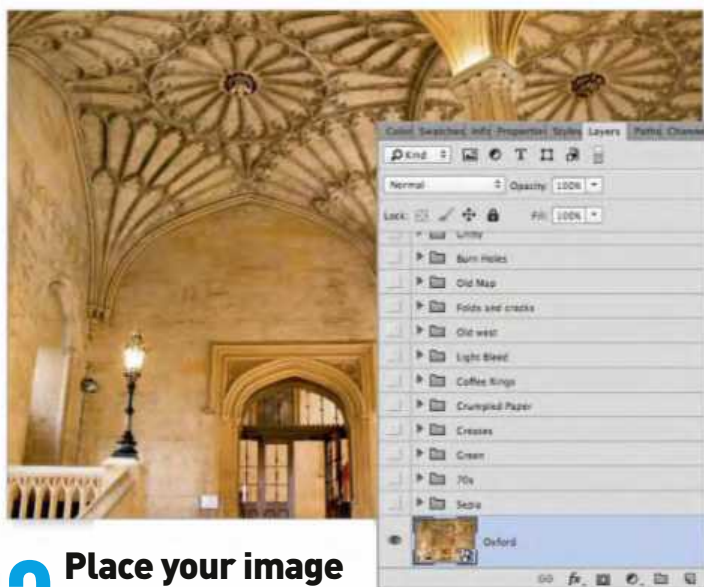
## 2 Open the pack into Photoshop and place a photo into it

**Double-click** on the unzipped PSD file to open it into Photoshop or Elements. You won't be able to see the effects until you import a photo, so go up to **File** → **Place** and navigate to a photo of your own. Alternatively, use the shot we've provided for you. It's called *Oxford.jpg* and you'll find it in the Start Images folder. **Double-click** it and it'll be placed into the shot above the active Layer. If the shot doesn't fill the canvas, drag the control handles until it does. Hold down the **Shift** key to constrain the proportions as you do so. Hit **Return** when you're done to finalise the changes and finish placing the image.



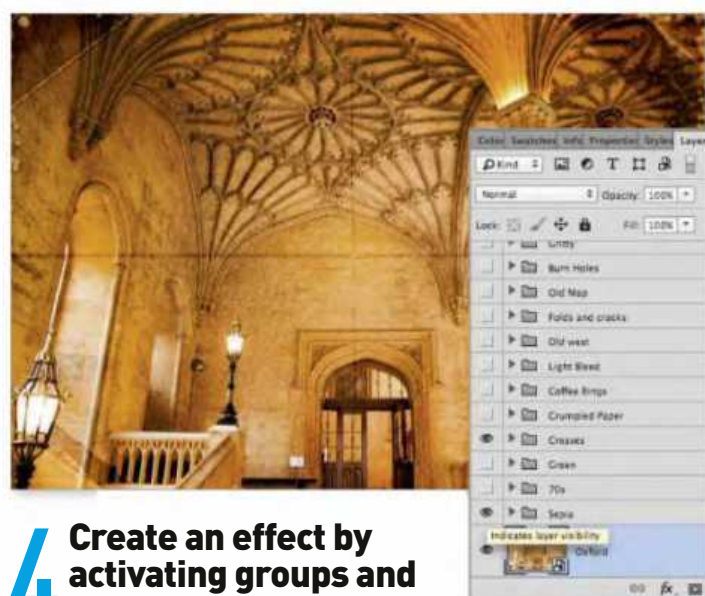
**After**

The *Sepia* effect in combination with *Folds* and *Cracks* gives a textured, distressed finish, though there are many more options to choose from.



### 3 Place your image at the bottom, under the effects groups

With the shot in position, it's time to look at the Layers panel. Make sure it's visible by going up to **Windows** and ensuring that **Layers** is ticked. For the effects to show up, you need to position your image at the bottom of the Layers stack. Imagine you're looking down at your photo, which is lying on a table. All the Layers above the image are like physical filters placed on top of the photo. You need to look down through the filters to the image beneath in order to see their effects. Photoshop works in exactly the same way. Therefore, if you drag your image to the very bottom of the Layers stack, you'll be able to see the effects of the various Layers above it.



### 4 Create an effect by activating groups and save your image

At the moment, the visibility of each of the effects is switched off, but you can turn on the visibility of each group one by one to see the effects. To do this, simply click once on the 'eye' icon alongside the Layer. Click it once more to toggle the visibility off again. Experiment by turning on two groups at the same time to see how they work in combination with one another. Once you've created an effect you like, save your retro-flavoured image by going to **File** → **Save As**. In the dialogue box, give your shot a new name so you don't save over the Retro Effects file. Use **JPEG** as the format to keep file sizes small, and after you've saved, you'll be returned to the full Layers stack so you can create another new look.



## At a glance

You'll learn How to customise our card templates with your own shots and our bespoke illustrations

### You'll need

Photoshop or Elements

### Time required

10 minutes

### Difficulty level

Easy

## On the disc

### Video lessons

Watch as Andy runs through this entire technique on your computer screen.

### Start image

The card templates, plus 12 bespoke decorative Christmas illustrations can be found in the Start Images folder.

# CREATE YOUR OWN CHRISTMAS CARDS



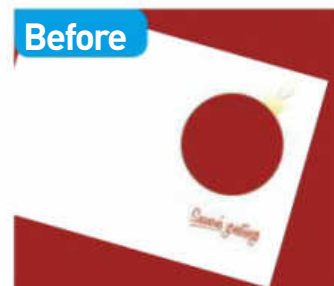
It's the thought that counts at Christmas, so get hands on and make sure your greetings cards have a personal touch!

TECHNIQUE & PICS BY ANDY HEATHER

**20 FREE  
CARD  
TEMPLATES  
ON YOUR CD**

Christmas is a great time of year for letting people know how much they mean to you and nothing says it better than something you made with your own hands. With our fantastic Christmas card templates, you can use your own photography to send a personal message to your nearest and dearest this festive season. Even better, we've also created a pack of 12 decorative illustrations for you to further personalise your cards. By using these templates and illustrations in different combinations you'll be able to create a huge variety of designs, so no two family members or friends need receive the same card.

We'll show you how to insert your own holiday message, add festive flavour and even change the font colours. It only takes a few minutes and requires no previous experience with Photoshop, so no matter what your level you'll be creating beautiful, bespoke cards before you know it. Read on to find out how!

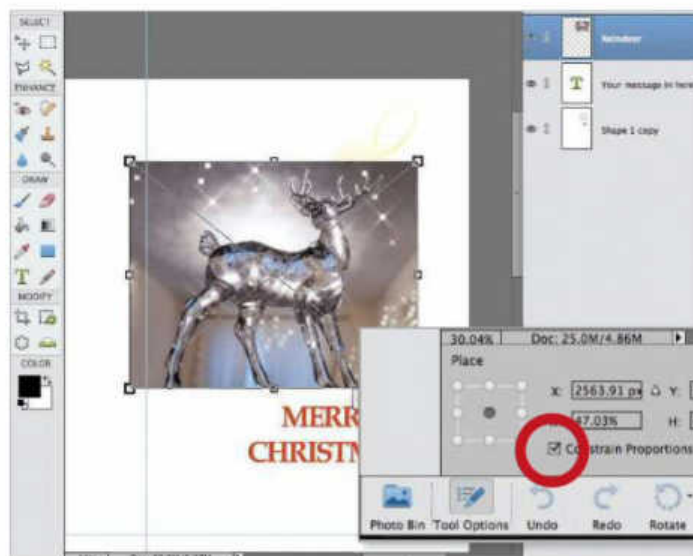


The card templates were created in Photoshop and saved as PSD files to ensure that transparent areas and text Layers were retained.



## 1 Open a card template and main image into Photoshop or Elements

Get started by selecting a template for your card. Some of them have 'holes' for more than one image, so choose one of these if you have several pics you'd like to include. Open Photoshop or Elements, then go to **File→Open** and double-click on your chosen template. Next, you want to choose an image to place in the window on the front of the card. To do this, go to **File→Place** and double-click your chosen shot. Alternatively, you can practice with the image we've provided for you. It's called *Reindeer.jpg* and it can be found in the Start Images folder. You'll need to be able to see your Layers panel, so click on **Window** and make sure that **Layers** is ticked.



## 2 Resize and reposition the photo so it'll fit in the window

You didn't hit **Return** to place the image in the last step, so the Transform control handles will still be visible. Drag the corner handles to resize the shot so that it sits over the hole in the card. You can also reposition the photo by clicking anywhere inside the bounding box and dragging. As you pull the corner handles, hold down the **Shift** key to make sure the proportions of the image don't change. Alternatively, look at the Tool Options bar and make sure that the **Constrain Proportions** box is ticked. You don't need to get it exactly right, because you can refine this later, so just place it roughly in the right spot, then hit **Return** to accept the changes.



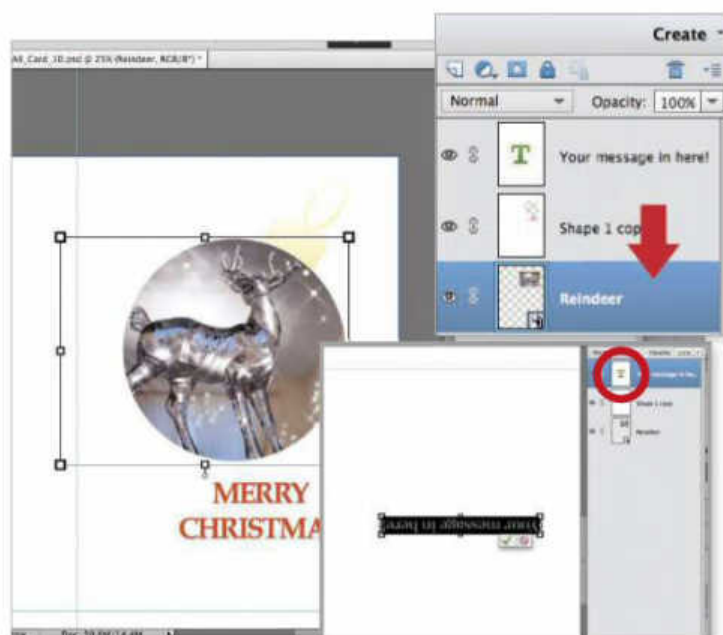
## MAKE CUSTOM GREETINGS CARDS

### After

Custom photo cards with your own pics are easy to create.

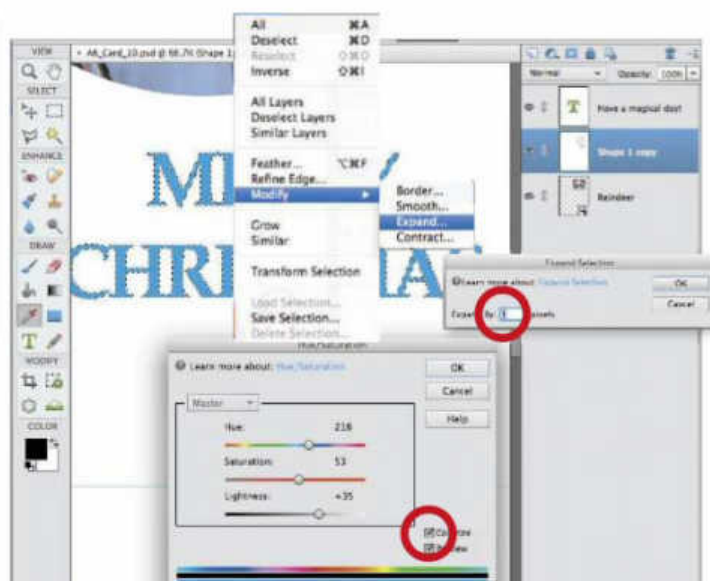






## 3 Make your photo the bottom Layer so it appears behind the card

Now, head back to your Layers panel and drag that photo Layer to the bottom of the stack. It'll now appear behind the card's design and cut-out window. This is the ideal time to fine-tune its position to make sure it shows neatly through the aperture. If you need to resize it again, just hit **Ctrl+T** to activate Free Transform and pull those control handles again. When you're happy with the placement of the image, it's time to insert your own message. To do that, go to the Text Layer at the top of the stack, and double-click the big **T**. The text will be highlighted, meaning you can now type in your own, custom festive greeting.



## 4 Customise the colour of the text

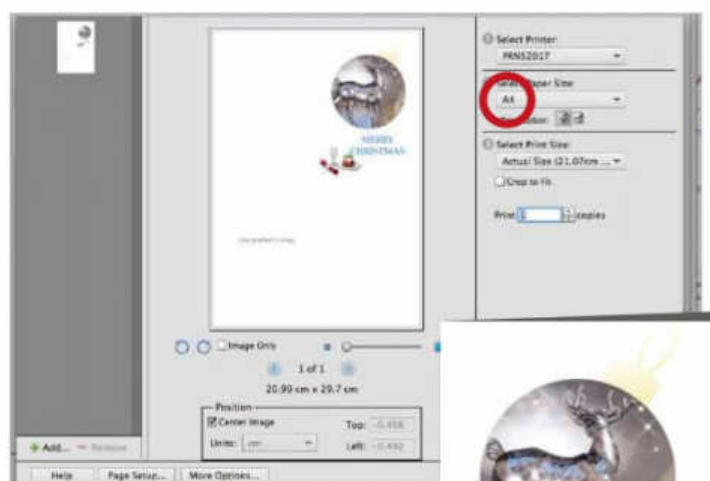
To change the colour of the text on the front, select the card Layer (the middle one in the stack) and activate the **Magic Wand tool**. You can do this by **Alt-clicking** on the **Quick Selection tool** icon until the **Magic Wand tool** appears. In the **Tool Options** bar, make sure **Contiguous** and **Sample All Layers** aren't ticked, then click once anywhere on the coloured text. You'll see a dotted line around it, signifying a Selection has been made. Go to **Select→Modify→Expand**. In the box, type **1** then hit **OK**. This ensures you've got all the text selected. Now go to **Enhance→Adjust Color→Adjust Hue/Saturation** (that's **Image→Adjustments→Hue/Saturation** in Photoshop). Tick the **Colorize** box, then adjust the **Lightness**, **Saturation** and **Hue** sliders until you've got a colour that works well with your image. When you're done, click on **OK** then hit **Ctrl+D** to remove the Selection lines.



## 5 Add an illustration

As a final touch, we've created an exclusive set of 12 Christmas-themed illustrations. You can use these as decorative elements to brighten up the corners of your cards, inside or out!

To use them, go to **File→Place** again, navigate to the *Start Images* folder and you'll find them in the *Christmas Cards* folder. Double-click the one you like, reposition and resize it as you did with your picture in Step 2, then hit **Return** to confirm the changes.



## 6 Print & save your card design

Now you're ready to print, so make sure you've got some good quality card in your printer. Go to **File→Print** and set to print on A4-sized paper, in colour and in the correction orientation. For this card, that's portrait orientation. When you've checked the settings are correct, hit **OK**. If you want to save your shot for future use, simply go to **File→Save As** and give your card a new name. If you want to keep the Layers intact so you can change the image and/or message at a later date, make sure you choose the **Photoshop (PSD)** format. If you choose **JPEG**, the Layers will be merged and you'll no longer be able easily to edit them individually.





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- Great for Bumps & Births
- Pet/Animal Portfolio Box
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- Create Marketing & Training information
- Great for fine-tuning any portfolio to a client

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4-colour  
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## HOW TO ORDER:

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## YOUR EXPERTS

Digital Photo's technical editor, **Dan**, and assistant editor, **Matty**, are on hand to help with insightful shooting and editing tips. To have your work shown and assessed in Your Pictures, email a selection of no more than five images to the address on the left, and put **Your Pictures** in the subject box.

## It's a new dawn by Nicholas Seymour

### What was used

Camera Canon 5D MkII & 17-40mm lens Exposure 51secs @ f/11, ISO 50 Software Lightroom 5



This was the first time I'd woken for sunrise in a long while but, with limited time left in Hong Kong, I was determined to get this shot.

Dealing with some severe humidity, I was lucky enough to clear the lens just as the sun's ink peaked over the horizon. In Lightroom, I made minor adjustments to the Exposure and Contrast levels.

● **Matty says** Nicholas has picked out a stellar composition, offering a great view of Hong Kong, with the green countryside lining the edges of this high-rise metropolis. What's more, Nicholas has timed his shot to capture the first light of the morning, with the sky filled with orange and blue hues.

It's a great picture, but could be fantastic with some subtle changes. The shot is a little underexposed, and this loses some of the nice detail in the architectural foreground. Also, the huge, dark, stormy cloud on the left creates quite a foreboding atmosphere. This feels a bit at odds with the golden dawn light. But these issues are easy to fix using some basic tweaks in Photoshop or Elements. Creating a **Levels** Adjustment Layer, via the option in the Layers panel, will offer Nicholas

a second chance at achieving a perfect exposure. With the Layers panel on screen, dragging the Highlights slider under the Histogram to the left will increase the overall brightness. Don't go too far with this adjustment though, or you'll blow out the detail in the brightest areas.

**"USING LEVELS OFFERS NICHOLAS A SECOND CHANCE TO ACHIEVE THE PERFECT EXPOSURE"**





## After

A Levels adjustment brightens the scene and enlarging the sunrise makes more of the wonderful colours.



With the exposure enhanced, it's time to look at the colours in the image. I think Nicholas has been quite conservative with his processing, and bolder colours would make the shot stronger. Creating another **Adjustment Layer** is a good way to do this, only this time, pick **Hue/Saturation** from the list. In the palette, clicking on the **Master** box allows you to choose specific colours rather than making global changes. In this image, boosting the **Yellows** and **Blues** gives extra impact.

To make more of that lovely patch of orange, select the whole sky with the **Lasso** or **Rectangular Marquee tool**, then you can enlarge it using **Free Transform** (see right). By stretching out the pixels, you can make more of the orange area and reduce the dominance of the dark cloud. This shot is really impressive, and after these tweaks, is one worth hanging on the wall!

## EXPERT ADVICE Stretch skies with Transform



Photoshop and Elements offer a number of Transform modes that enable the pixels to be warped, stretched, skewed and generally moved around for creative purposes. After making a Selection and feathering it in **Refine Edge**, hit **Ctrl+J** to place it in a new Layer. Next hit **Ctrl+T** to enter **Free Transform** mode. By

pulling the handles around the bounding box, you can reduce or enlarge the size of the Layer. Once you've made any changes, hit **Return** to apply them. Then you can tidy up any overlapping areas or rough edges left using the **Eraser tool**.



## After

Boosting the shadows reveals extra detail and gives a textured foreground to the low sun bursting through the trees.



# First light

by Paul Taylor

### What was used

Camera Nikon D5200 & 18-55mm lens Exposure Three exposures @ f/3.5 ISO 400 Software Photomatrix



I woke up before sunrise to see a beautiful mist and the start of a red sky, perfect for searching for that good shot. A walk in the woods led to a dark trail with the sunlight bursting through – a great opportunity to practise some HDR techniques. I quickly set up my camera on a tripod and took a three-shot bracketed sequence that I later merged together in Photomatrix HDR software.

● **Dan says** Being out for the first light is a great way to see locations with fresh eyes. Low, directional light reveals textures in subjects that is missed during more sociable hours, so a big thumbs up to Paul for not only making the effort to get out of bed, but for

also spotting the potential of this woodland scene. The trail looks mysterious and leads us through the frame towards the other-worldly light. Paul has also made a wise choice in shooting the scene as an HDR. With the very dark leaves and ultra-bright light, no camera would manage to expose for both extremes in a single shot, and the exposure bracket of an HDR will reveal detail in both the shadows and highlights.

Where Peter's image needs a little more work is in the exposure balance. Despite the HDR work, the image is rather dark, but this can be fixed using the Shadows/Highlights command, found in **Image→Adjustments→Shadows/Highlights** (Enhance→Adjust

**“LOW, DIRECTIONAL LIGHT REVEALS TEXTURE NORMALLY MISSED DURING THE DAY”**

## Before



**Lighting→Shadows/Highlights** in Elements). With the exposure more balanced, the next step is to embrace the first-light feel by adding a warming Photo Filter via an Adjustment Layer. To push the light ray effect to maximum, you could try adding some Lens Flare. This can be found via **Filter→Render→Lens Flare** and the preview will help you place the Flare where you want it.

This shot is a great reward for Paul's early start, and drawing out more shadow detail turns it into a winner.



## Before



## After

Converting to mono reinforces the classic, reportage styling of Solomentsev's colour original.



# Expectation

by Solomentsev Kirill

## What was used

**Camera** Nikon D3200 & 50mm f/1.8 lens

**Exposure** 1/400sec @ f/1.8, ISO 100 **Software** Photoshop



I had recently taken a class at the Nikon School in London on portraiture when a friend asked me to take a few pictures for her. It was a rainy day, so we retreated to a bus shelter and

I used a large aperture of f/1.8 to blur the background and give a shallow depth-of-field.

● **Dan says** I like this shot. It's immediately striking and the eyes-off expression is intriguing. Portraits without direct eye contact have a candid air, and suggest that the subject is lost in their own thoughts, and oblivious to the camera. Although Solomentsev has set up the shot with his model, it has the look of an elegantly-composed street shot – a reportage-style slice of time that successfully challenges your thoughts and makes you question the scene. Is she waiting to meet somebody? What is she thinking? Who is she looking at? The context of the bus shelter juxtaposes the model's beauty against a drab, everyday scene, and this subverts the popular type of lifestyle shots that show smiling people sitting on hay bales or walking through sun-drenched cornfields.

Solomentsev has expertly used a large aperture of f/1.8 to isolate the subject in a very shallow band of sharpness, and has focused precisely on the nearest eye, keeping facial details sharp but allowing the focus to fall away from this point. This reveals a solid, technical grasp of portraiture techniques and shows how effective a 50mm lens can be.

Being critical, the only thing I'm not so sure about is the position of the people in the background. While they complement the location, they're a little distracting as they invade the model's outline. A step to the left could have solved this, and would have given the model her own 'space'.

This shot has a serious feel, and Solomentsev should be proud of what he's achieved. The slightly desaturated colour treatment is good, but with the reportage styling, I'd really like to lose the colour altogether and see it in black & white! A quick conversion in Photoshop with **Ctrl+Shift+U** gives a reasonable mono rendition with this image, and some localised work with the Dodge and Burn tools (see right) increases the contrast in the key areas. I like what Solomentsev has done though, and the mono version offers a classic alternative.

**“SOLOMENTSEV HAS EXPERTLY USED A LARGE APERTURE OF F/1.8 TO ISOLATE THE SUBJECT”**

## EXPERT ADVICE Dodging & Burning

With the Dodge & Burn tools in Photoshop and Elements, you can brighten or darken shadows, midtones or highlights using a brush. But the default settings are way too extreme for successful photographic use. After selecting the **Dodge tool**, go to the Tool Options bar and set **Range** to **Highlights** and **Exposure** to **5%**. Paint onto the areas you want to brighten, and only the highlights will be affected. With the **Burn tool**, set **Range** to **Shadows** and **Exposure** to **5%**. Now paint onto the image, and only the darker areas will be affected. As you dodge and burn, build up the effect gradually and take care not to overdo the effect.





## Black Rock Cottage

by Elaine Corbett

### What was used

Camera Nikon D3000 & 18-55mm Exposure 1/250sec, f/10 @ ISO 140 Software Photoshop



This photo was taken at Black Rock Cottage near Glencoe while on a trip to Scotland. The cottage was a location I always wanted to photograph and the weather was perfect. In

Photoshop I enhanced the foreground by increasing the Saturation.

● **Matty says** Having photographed this very location myself, I can tell you sunny days in the Glencoe are rare, so I'm really pleased conditions were favourable for Elaine. It's great to see photographers following their dreams and making the effort to seek out more remote locations, and Elaine's image is thoughtfully composed, with the cottage nicely positioned on the left. However, the image could work a little harder as the sky lacks impact and is a little overexposed. An ND graduated filter would have kept the sky darker at the time of capture, but Photoshop can be used to recreate a similar effect. Set Black as the foreground colour, then duplicate the **Background** Layer. Select

the **Gradient** tool using the **Foreground to Transparent** option, you can draw a line from the top of the frame to the bottom to add a black-to-clear gradient. Change the **Blending Mode** in the Layers panel from **Normal** to **Soft Light** and the original pic Layer will seep through, crowned with a darker sky. This adds mood and atmosphere to the pic and will help rein in the slight overexposure of the clouds.

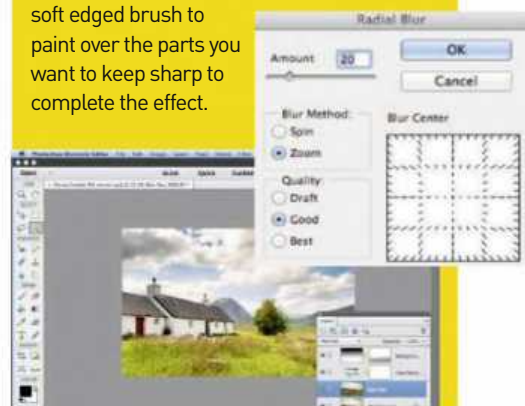
To make more of that big sky, the effect of another optical filter can be emulated. By using the **Radial Blur** filter (see right) you can introduce blurred movement into the clouds, giving a similar result to a long exposure with a 10-stop ND filter. This adds a fine-art feel to any landscape image.

Finally, although Elaine did boost the Saturation in the foreground, I think she's been a little reserved in her editing. By adding a **Hue/Saturation** Adjustment Layer, and dragging the Saturation slider to the right, the colours in the whole scene start to pop.

**"PHOTOSHOP CAN BE USED TO RECREATE THE EFFECTS OF ND AND ND GRAD FILTERS"**

### EXPERT ADVICE Add motion with Radial Blur

ND filters work by reducing the amount of light that gets through to the sensor. The longer shutter speeds that result capture the motion of anything moving – like clouds or waves – and turn it into an ethereal blur. To recreate the effect in Photoshop or Elements, duplicate the **Background** Layer (**Ctrl+J**) then go to **Filter→Blur→Radial Blur**. In the dialogue box, Select **Zoom** under **Blur Method** and drag the **Amount** slider to **12**. Hit **OK** and the effect will be applied to the whole frame. To remove the effect for the foreground, add a **Layer Mask** in the Layers panel, and select the **Brush** tool. Set the foreground colour to black, and use a large soft edged brush to paint over the parts you want to keep sharp to complete the effect.



### After

Adding motion to the clouds adds an extra level of energy to the frame.



### Before





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Digital Photo June 2014

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# PHOTO ANSWERS

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### YOUR PHOTO EXPERTS



**JON ADAMS** For shooting and Photoshop queries, Jon is on hand to help solve any problems you have.



**DAN MOLD** With a background in photographic retail, Tech Ed Dan can advise on all aspects of camera kit.



**MATTY GRAHAM** Assistant Editor Matty is never seen without his DSLR, and is brimming with shooting tips.



**ANDY HEATHER** Andy worked as a commercial photographer in Japan, and is overflowing with advice.



### PHOTOSHOP

## Can I brighten a specific part of my shot in Elements?

**Q** I took my Canon EOS 760D DSLR and Tamron 60mm f/2 macro lens to the London Aquarium recently and had great success shooting some of the different species on display. The wide f/2 aperture and close focusing was great for shooting the fish and I got some pleasing shots, one of which I've included. The background is bright but the fish is a little underexposed. I'd like to know if I can fix this in post-processing? I use Photoshop Elements 13 and I'd love to know if there's a way to do this – ideally one that's easy.  
*Jack Hill*

**• Dan says** There's no denying that cameras have improved drastically over the years. DSLRs now offer a brilliant dynamic range, delivering deep shadows and bright highlights. But, try as it might, a camera's metering system will never get it right 100% of the time. After all, it can't read your mind!

So you shouldn't be surprised if a subject comes out darker or lighter than expected. But you don't have to live with the exposure you got at the point of capture. Photoshop and Elements have all the tools you need to brighten and darken specific areas of a shot, so you can get it looking how you envisioned it.

If you've used Photoshop for a little while then no-doubt you'll have experimented with the Levels palette. This can be used to brighten or darken your pics and adjust the amount of contrast. But you can't restrict the effect to a specific area if you apply changes in the regular, global way.

However, to change just one part of a scene, you can use a Layer Mask with your Levels adjustment. This allows you to stop the changes you make from spilling over the whole scene. With a Layer Mask, you can simply paint onto the image, choosing exactly where you want the effect to be applied.

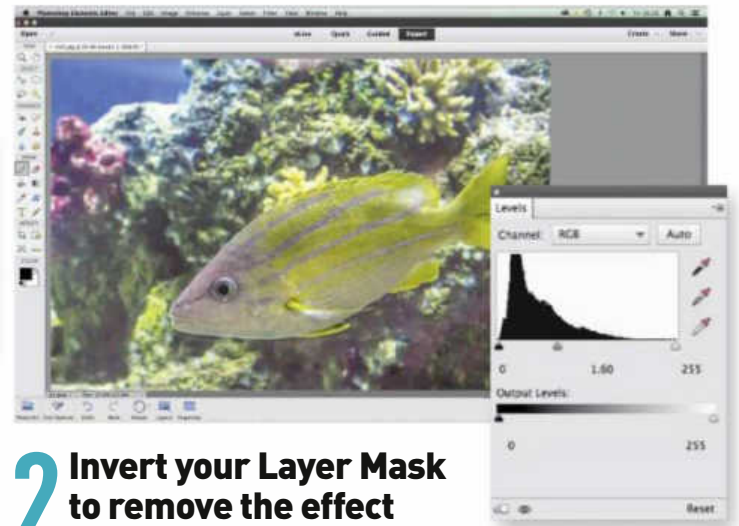


## Learn how to brighten a specific area of your picture with a Levels Adjustment Layer and Mask



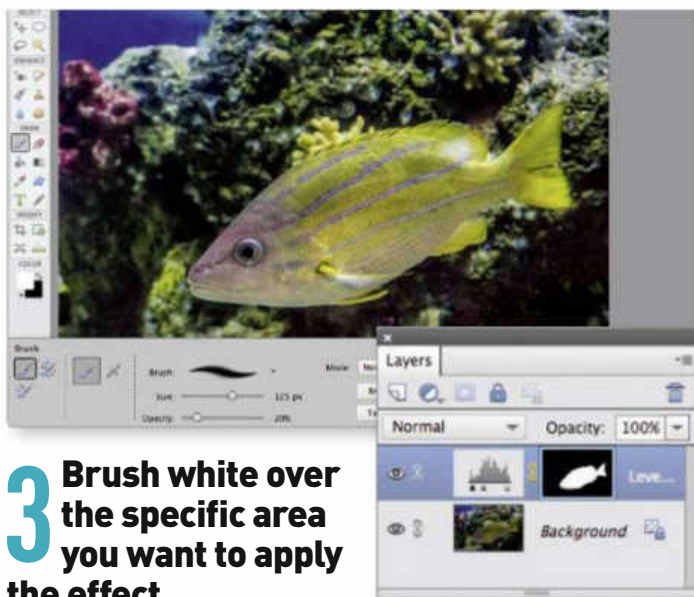
### 1 Create a Levels Adjustment Layer and brighten the pic

Open your picture into Photoshop or Elements and check that the Layers panel is on screen. If it's not, go to **Window→Layers**. In the panel, click on the **Create New Fill or Adjustment Layer** icon – it looks like a half white, half black circle. From the list that drops down, select **Levels**. You'll see a new **Levels 1** Layer appear above the **Background** Layer in the Layers stack. It will have a white rectangle alongside it. This is your Levels Adjustment Layer, and its associated Layer Mask.



### 2 Invert your Layer Mask to remove the effect

The Levels palette will appear as soon as you create the Levels Adjustment Layer. The graph in the display is the Histogram and shows you the distribution of tones in your picture, with the darkest on the left and the brightest on the right. The three sliders beneath control the Shadows, Midtones and Highlights in the image. Dragging the middle Midtones slider to the left will make the image much brighter, revealing more detail. On the example pic, a value of **1.60** worked well for the fish. With the adjustment made, you can take the general exposure back to its starting point by hitting **Ctrl+I**. This will invert the Layer Mask, turning it from white to black. Painting black into a Layer Mask hides the effect its Layer is having, so you've blocked the brightening effect you've just created.



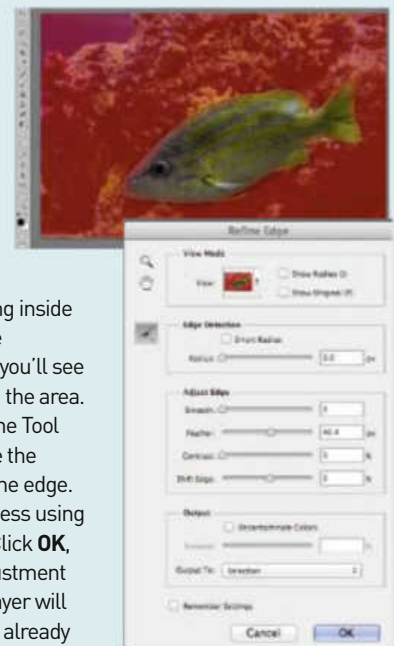
### 3 Brush white over the specific area you want to apply the effect

With the Levels Adjustment Layer completely masked off, it's now time to unmask the specific area you want to brighten. Go to the Toolbox and select the **Brush tool**. In the Tool Options bar, set a Brush **Size** of **125px** to start with, and choose an **Opacity** of **20%**. Now hit **D** on the keyboard to ensure your foreground colour is white, and brush over the area you want to brighten. Painting white onto the Layer Mask reveals the content of its Layer, so the brightening effect you applied appears on the image. You can fine-tune the brush size with the **[** and **]** keys for better accuracy. When you've painted out the area you want to change, go to **Layer→Flatten Image** and then save the image under a new name via **File→Save As**.

## Expert tip! Use Selections with Layer Masks for pro-style editing

Another way to make localised brightness changes is to first make a Selection of the area you want to alter. You can use any of the Selection tools, but the **Lasso tool** is popular for irregular-shapes.

Roughly draw around the subject, staying inside its edge, and when you've completed the Selection, you'll see 'marching ants' surround the area. Click on **Refine Edge** in the Tool Options bar, and increase the **Feather** slider to soften the edge. You can preview the softness using the **View Mode** options. Click **OK**, then create a **Levels Adjustment Layer**. The Adjustment Layer will be created with the Mask already defined by the Selection you've made, so you can now adjust the brightness using the Levels sliders under the Histogram as in Step 2.





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## KNOW HOW

# Should I shoot 4K video to record a high speed sequence of stills?



**Q** I've heard that stills can be extracted from hi-speed 4K video so that I never miss the moment. Is this true and what's the best way to do this?  
*Mike Hardy*

● **Dan says** 4K is four times the resolution of Full HD, so stills extracted from a video sequence footage have a much more usable resolution of 8Mp compared to the 2Mp stills you get with Full HD. Cameras with the capability to record 4K such as Panasonic's G7 can record video at up to 30fps which is over twice as many frames as the burst rate on the fastest, pro-level DSLR.

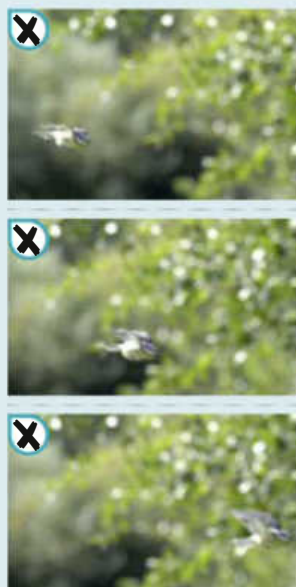
4K increases the amount of frames you take, so it certainly improves your chance of capturing the precise moment you're trying to record, but it isn't foolproof. A 4K video is still susceptible to the same focus and shutter speed issues you have with stills photography – so if your subject is out of the sharp zone of focus, or your shutter speed is too slow, then your subject will be out of focus or not sharp from motion blur.

Shooting 4K at such high shutter speeds results in a rather unnatural, jagged playback when viewing it as a movie, because video uses a small amount of motion blur to make action look smooth and fluid. So you really need to see the 4K mode as a lower-resolution, ultra-fast burst mode for stills.

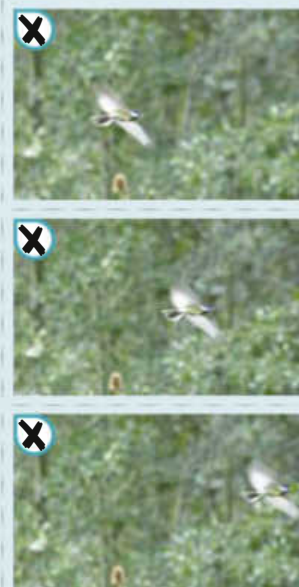
Another downside of 4K is that it takes up a lot of space – about 1GB per minute of video footage, and the sheer volume of frames

## 4K examples

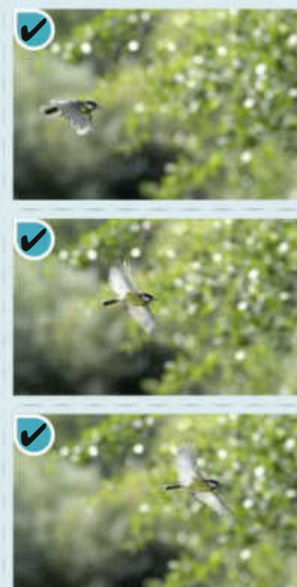
### Subject out of focus



### Shutter speed too slow



### Sharp



recorded means it will take a lot of time for you to scour the footage looking for that perfect frame. 8Mp is enough to make a high quality print at A4 size (at a resolution of 240ppi), but you'll have less scope to crop or edit your picture as you would with a full resolution JPEG or a RAW file.

Panasonic's Lumix G7 allows users to scroll through the sequence on the camera's screen and export the exact frame you want, though

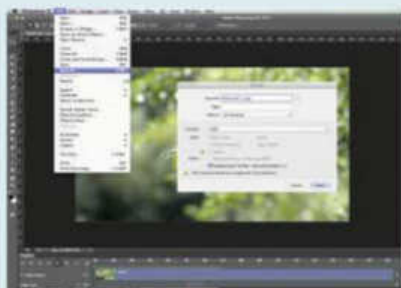
not all 4K-enabled cameras have this option. You may also prefer to do this using the larger screen on your computer, though this requires the full version of Photoshop (CC) or Lightroom (5/6/CC). You'll also need a computer powerful enough to handle the data from streams of 8Mp images – it's a processing-intensive task.

To extract stills from 4K video footage in Photoshop or Lightroom, see the panel below.

## Expert tip! How to extract stills from video

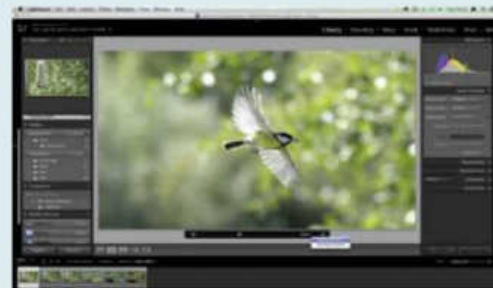
### Photoshop

Open your 4K video into Photoshop and you'll see a Timeline panel at the bottom of the screen. Pull the zoom slider at the very bottom of the interface to see footage frame-by-frame. Drag the scrubber bar until you're at the exact frame you want. Then go to **File → Save As** and save the pic in the **JPEG** format.



### Lightroom

In the **Library** tab hit **Import** and find your 4K video. Click on your video in the Filmstrip then click on the cog icon in the Timeline. This brings up two single frame advance buttons either side of the Play button which you can use to find the exact moment you'd like to extract. Then click on the rectangle icon next to the cog, click **Capture Frame** and then **Right-click** on your movie in the Filmstrip at the bottom of the screen and **Export** the still in the usual way.







## Circular Filters

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### ND1000 Filters

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52mm	£24.00	72mm	£29.50
55mm	£24.50	77mm	£32.50
58mm	£25.50	82mm	£37.50

"Best Value" in Photoplus Big Stopper Group Test

### ND Fader Filter

★★★★★ - AP Magazine

46mm	£26.00	62mm	£32.00
49mm	£27.00	67mm	£35.00
52mm	£27.50	72mm	£36.00
55mm	£29.50	77mm	£39.00
58mm	£31.00		

4 stars from AP Magazine for Quality & Value

### ND Filters

Sizes: 27 to 82mm

46mm	£17.00	62mm	£21.00
49mm	£17.00	67mm	£23.00
52mm	£18.00	72mm	£26.00
55mm	£19.00	77mm	£28.00
58mm	£20.00	82mm	£31.00

4 Grades: 0.3, 0.6, 0.9, 1.2

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58mm	£17.00	82mm	£26.00
62mm	£17.50	86mm	£33.50

### UV Filters

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49mm	£12.95	67mm	£14.95
52mm	£12.95	72mm	£15.95
55mm	£12.95	77mm	£17.95
58mm	£13.95	82mm	£19.95

### ND Grad Filters

### ND Grad Filters

Sizes: 40.5 to 82mm

46mm	£16.50	62mm	£20.00
49mm	£17.00	67mm	£21.00
52mm	£18.00	72mm	£21.50
55mm	£19.00	77mm	£22.50
58mm	£19.50	82mm	£24.50

4 Grades: 0.3, 0.6, 0.9, 1.2

The SRB ND and ND Grad Filters have been listed in Amateur Photographer's Top 10 Landscape Accessories

## More Circular Filters...

Size information at our website - SRB-Photographic.co.uk

Infrared Filters	from £17.50	*4 Types: Red, Yellow, Green, Orange	Colour Grad Filters* from £14.00	*3 Types: Blue, Sunset, Twilight
Skylight Filters	from £12.50		Star Effect 4-Point from £14.00	
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## Square Filters

### Pro Filter Holder

Aluminium Filter Holder

A Size	£19.95
P Size	£24.95
P Size W/A	£24.95



### Pro Filter Kits

3 types: Full ND, Soft ND, Hard ND

A Size Starter	£34.95
A Size Filter	£49.95
P Size Starter	£39.50
P Size Filter	£54.95



### Square Filter Holders

A Size	£8.95
P Size	£5.00
P Size W/A	£5.00
Adaptor Rings	£4.95



### Square Filter Kits

3 types: Full ND, Soft ND, Hard ND

A Size Starter	£24.95
A Size Filter	£39.95
P Size Starter	£24.95
P Size Filter	£39.95



Starter Kit: 1 Filter Filter Kit: 3 Filters

## Individual Square Filters

A & P Size Resin Filters

0.3 Full ND	£13.50	0.9 Hard ND Grad	£13.50
0.6 Full ND	£13.50	1.2 Hard ND Grad	£15.95
0.9 Full ND	£13.50	Circular Polariser	£26.00
1.2 Full ND	£15.95	Blue Grad	£13.50
0.3 Soft ND Grad	£13.50	Sunset Grad	£13.50
0.6 Soft ND Grad	£13.50	Twilight Grad	£13.50
0.9 Soft ND Grad	£13.50	Black & White Filters	£13.50
1.2 Soft ND Grad	£15.95	4x Star Effect	£13.50
0.3 Hard ND Grad	£13.50	6x Star Effect	£13.50
0.6 Hard ND Grad	£13.50	P Size Diffusion Filter	£12.50

0.3 ND Glass Pro	£29.95
0.6 ND Glass Pro	£29.95
0.9 ND Glass Pro	£29.95
ND Glass Pro Set	£79.95

5 stars for build, image quality & value for money. April 2014



## Close up Lens Sets



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Digital Photo Mag, 2015

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## Lens Adaptors

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Canon EOS	to Nikon	£22.95	Micro 4/3	to Nikon G	£34.95
Canon EOS	to Nikon G*	£39.95	Micro 4/3	to M42	£29.95
Canon EOS	to Pentax K	£24.95	Micro 4/3	to Olympus OM	£29.95
Canon EOS	to Olympus OM	£24.95	Micro 4/3	to Minolta MD	£29.95
Canon EOS	to Con/Yash	£24.95	Micro 4/3	to Leica R	£29.95
Canon EOS	to Leica R	£22.95	Micro 4/3	to Leica M	£29.95
Canon EOS	to Leica M	£24.95	Micro 4/3	to Sony Alpha	£34.95
Canon EOS	to Canon FD	£44.95	Micro 4/3	to Pentax K	£29.95
Canon EOS-M	to Canon EOS	£29.95	Micro 4/3	to Canon FD	£29.95
Canon EOS-M	to Leica M	£29.95	Micro 4/3	to Con/Yash	£29.95
Canon EOS-M	to Nikon	£29.95	4/3	to M42	£17.95
Canon EOS-M	to Canon FD	£29.95	4/3	to Con/Yash	£22.95
Canon EOS-M	to C Mount	£29.95	4/3	to Leica R	£22.95
Canon EOS-M	to M39	£29.95	4/3	to Nikon	£22.95
Canon EOS-M	to M42	£29.95	4/3	to Olympus OM	£22.95
Fuji X	to M42	£24.95	4/3	to Pentax K	£22.95
Fuji X	to Leica M	£29.95	Pentax	to M42	£18.95
Fuji X	to Nikon	£29.95	Pentax	to Nikon	£44.95
Fuji X	to Canon EOS	£29.95	Pentax	to Sony Alpha	£44.95
Fuji X	to Olympus OM	£29.95	Pentax	to Canon FD	£44.95
Fuji X	to 4/3	£29.95	Sony Alpha	to M42	£15.95
Fuji X	to Canon FD	£29.95	Sony Alpha	to Minolta MD	£44.95
Fuji X	to Con/Yash	£29.95	Sony Alpha	to Nikon	£44.95
Nikon	to M42	£24.95	Sony Alpha	to Pentax K	£44.95
Nikon	to Canon FD	£44.95	Sony Alpha	to Canon FD	£44.95
Nikon	to C Mount	£32.95	Sony NEX	to Canon EOS	£29.95
Nikon 1	to M42	£24.95	Sony NEX	to Nikon	£29.95
Nikon 1	to M39	£22.95	Sony NEX	to Sony Alpha	£34.95
Nikon 1	to Nikon	£29.95	Sony NEX	to Olympus OM	£29.95
Nikon 1	to Canon EOS	£44.95	Sony NEX	to Pentax K	£29.95
Nikon 1	to Pentax K	£29.95	Sony NEX	to Leica M	£29.95
Nikon 1	to Leica M	£39.95	Sony NEX	to Leica R	£29.95
Nikon 1	to Leica R	£37.95	Sony NEX	to Canon FD	£42.95
Nikon 1	to Con/Yash	£23.95	Sony NEX	to M39	£23.95
Micro 4/3	to Canon EOS	£29.95	Sony NEX	to M42	£23.95

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ND Filters	£64.95
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Little Stopper	£68.00
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### Lee SW150



SW150 Mark II Holder	£150.00
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20ft. Air Release	£12.50



DSLR Bracket	£24.95
Compact Bracket	£19.95
Angled Bracket	£24.95



## BUYING ADVICE

## Should I buy a gimbal head?

**Q** I'm interested in wildlife photography and have a Nikon D5300 as well as a 70-300mm lens. Online sources suggest that a gimbal tripod head is the best choice for wildlife. Is this true?  
*Jasmine Green*

● **Dan says** There is some truth to this. A gimbal head is suitable for professionals that lug around heavy, fast telephoto lenses. Balancing a behemoth 300mm or 600mm lens on a standard tripod head isn't wise as these optics are too heavy to use without the risk of toppling over – a catastrophic prospect.

A gimbal head is designed specifically for these larger lenses to cradle the lens 'foot' and centralise the load. The lens foot is attached to an arm that can swing up and down, while the



base of the gimbal can be pivoted from side-to-side. This makes it much easier to position the large optics in the horizontal and vertical axis.

So should you buy one? Well, no. Your 70-300mm lens is much more portable, weighing around 600g, so it won't topple your tripod with a standard head. For wildlife you'd be better off with a pan & tilt head as this allows the lens to be panned horizontally or vertically in a similar matter to a gimbal but is much smaller and more affordable. But if you ever upgrade to a pro telephoto optic – a gimbal is a sensible choice!

## PHOTOSHOP

## Why can't I open my RAW files?

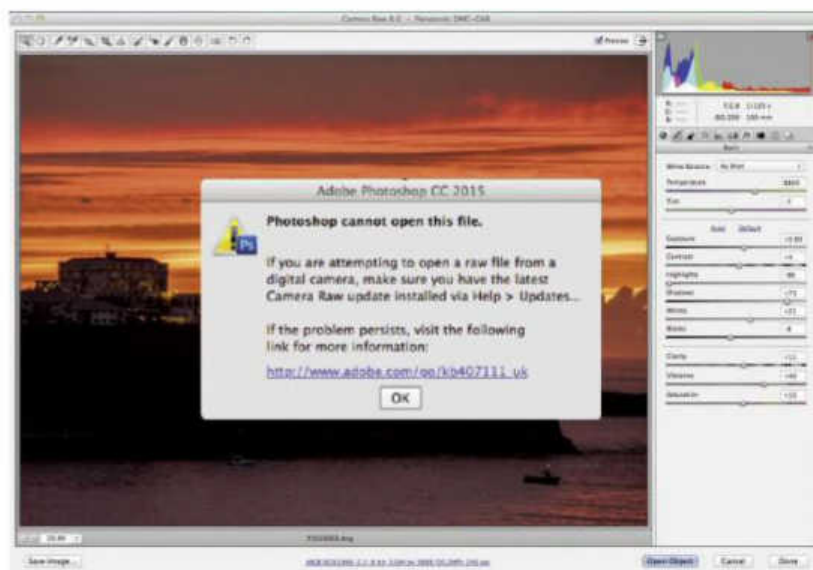
**Q** Could you please advise me on the following problem. I have recently purchased a Fujifilm X100T. None of my software will allow me to work with RAW files. I have tried My Finepix Studio, Elements 12 and RAW Converter powered by Silkypix EX 1/1. My Fujifilm XE2 works fine. What's up?  
*Bill Johnson*

● **Matty says** RAWs are unique to the specific camera that creates them. So, if your camera is more recent than your software, you won't be able to access them, as the software was created before the RAW file type existed.

With Photoshop or Elements, the Fujifilm X100T requires Camera Raw 8.7 to read its RAW files. This can only be used in Elements 13/14 or Photoshop

CS6/CC. If you want to use the X100T's RAW files with Elements 12, then you'll need to convert them to DNG format using the free Adobe DNG converter. The latest version DNG converter can be downloaded here:

**Mac** [www.adobe.com/support/downloads/detail.jsp?ftpID=5914](http://www.adobe.com/support/downloads/detail.jsp?ftpID=5914)  
**Windows** [www.adobe.com/support/downloads/detail.jsp?ftpID=5915](http://www.adobe.com/support/downloads/detail.jsp?ftpID=5915)



If you get a message saying Photoshop cannot open your RAW you need to upgrade or update your software. You can also convert them to the universally friendly DNG RAW format for free.



## Are all Alphas the same?

**Q** I have a Sony Alpha A58 DSLT and am interested in buying a year-old A7 which is also an Alpha model. Will I be able to use my existing lenses if I make the upgrade?  
*Brian Clarke*

● **Dan says** Sony currently has three lens mounts for its Alpha cameras. DSLTs such as your A58 are A mount, but CSCs have a different E and FE mount for APS-C and full-frame lenses respectively. This means your current lenses won't work with the full-frame A7 CSC because it's an FE mount. You can however get a Sony A to E adapter which will allow you to use them.



## Learn more in Practical Photography

The December issue of *Practical Photography* features an exclusive competition to win three amazing Nikon cameras\*, 24 colour luminosity Actions for Photoshop and Elements, a complete 14-page guide to great telephoto lens techniques, and a massive round-up of the best DSLR and CSC kits for under £650. All this and much more, on sale now for £4.99! (\*UK only)





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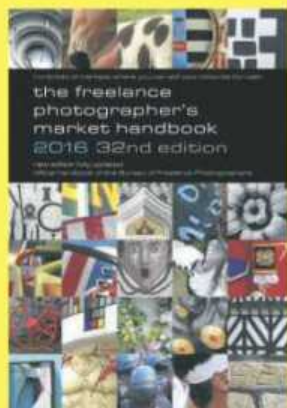
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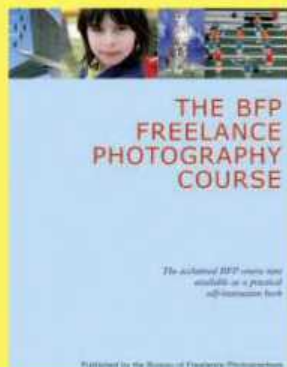


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# Gear



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**111** Gear of the Year results



## COMPACT SYSTEM CAMERAS

# Canon launches entry-level CSC

Canon has announced its fourth compact system camera, the EOS M10. The original three-year-old EOS M is now discontinued and the European market never saw Canon's second incarnation, the EOS M2. The recently announced EOS M3 has been well received, but Canon's latest M is the new entry-level CSC model.

It may be small, but the EOS M10 gets the same 18Mp APS-C sensor found in the 100D DSLR – so image quality should be very good. It has a powerful Digic 6 imaging processor and the Hybrid CMOS AF II system is said to be 2.5x faster at focusing than the original EOS M, but fractionally slower than the premium EOS M3 which has a newer Hybrid CMOS AF III system.

The rear 3in touchscreen has a 1040k-dot resolution and can be flipped up by 180° to help compose from awkward angles or take a selfie.

A brand new EF-M 15-45mm f/3.5-6.3 IS STM optic will be deployed as a kit lens with the M10. It



The latest EOS M10 compact system camera features an 18Mp APS-C format sensor.



The entry-level EOS-M10 offers a touchscreen interface and a built-in flash.

boasts a lens lock and has the ability to collapse down. This makes it 25% shorter when packed away than the standard 18-55mm with the M3.

Canon has also expanded its compact PowerShot range with the G5 X and G9 X. Both cameras utilise a 1in Back-Illuminated 20.2Mp CMOS sensor and Digic 6 processor. The G5 X takes on a DSLR-styled body with large grip and a 2360k-dot Electronic Viewfinder. The G9 X on the other hand is designed for portability with dimensions of 98.0x57.9x30.8mm and a weight of just 209g with a battery and SD card inserted.

All products are available to buy now with the EOS M10 costing £309.99 body only or £399.99 with the EF-M 15-45mm lens. The G5 X and G9 X compacts are priced at £629.99 and £399.99 respectively.



The camera features the EF-M lens mount, and while EF and EF-S lenses won't fit straight on, an adaptor is available.

## SOFTWARE

## Adobe releases Photoshop Elements 14

Adobe recently announced an update to its popular, consumer-friendly photo editing app Photoshop Elements. Sporting a handful of new features and enhancements over the previous version, Adobe claims the new Photoshop Elements 14 is easier to use than ever.

Among the new features is the introduction of Auto Shake Reduction. Previously available to Photoshop CC users, the tool is designed to improve shots marred by camera shake, such as selfies taken at arm's length. Another new feature inherited from Photoshop CC is the Auto Haze Removal tool, which is designed to add definition to misty or hazy areas of your shots. Not only does it aim to cut through airborne

moisture to make the background as crisp as what's up front, it's also good for those summer snorkelling shots taken in cloudy water. The last of the new features is called Smart Looks. The tool analyses your images and offers a selection of five custom effects for you to choose from.

When it comes to enhancements, you'll find a new and improved Quick Edit Mode which Adobe claims will make common tools like crop and straighten even easier to find. There are also now 34 Guided Edits, intended to help newcomers through the steps required to make common edits. Also, the Refine Edge tool has now been spun off into its own brush called the Refine Selection Brush. It's designed

to be brushed over edges containing hair or fur and attempts intelligently to make a Selection around them. The Elements Organizer face recognition algorithm has also been updated, promising faster filtering of photos based on the people appearing in them.

Adobe Photoshop Elements 14 is available for Mac and Windows now from [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com), priced at £79.10 (full version) or £64.81 (upgrade).

Elements 14 features new tools seen in Photoshop CC.





## ACCESSORIES

# Manfrotto kit bonanza

The Manfrotto group has launched a number of new accessories including bags, lights and camera supports. On the bag front, the 'Street' collection features four models (one backpack, three shoulder bags) with urban styling. Priced from £29.99 for the smaller Street Holster, all bags feature are green with a camo pattern inside. The larger Street Medium Backpack can carry a DSLR, 2/3 lenses and a 15in laptop.

Also launched is the Off Road Thrilled – a battery-powered LED for GoPro 3 & 4 action cameras. Priced at £74.95, the high-power LEDs can be dimmed.

Finally, Manfrotto has released three new versions of its PIXI mini tripod. The PIXI Xtreme comes with a special adaptor for GoPros, while the PIXI Smart includes a universal clamp to lock a smartphone in place. The PIXI EVO sports redesigned legs that increase in length by sliding out.

The PIXI Xtreme and Smart cost £29.95, while the PIXI EVO is priced at £44.95. [www.manfrotto.co.uk](http://www.manfrotto.co.uk)



## ACR adds Dehaze as a Local Adjustment



Dehaze was introduced as a global adjustment in ACR 9.1 but it can now be applied as a Local Adjustment with the Radial Filter, Graduated Filter and Adjustment Brush tools. New cameras and lenses are also now supported – see the link below for more info.

[www.adobe.com/uk](http://www.adobe.com/uk)



## Tenba Switch things up

Injecting fun into a camera bag is a tall order, but Tenba's Switch range has been created to do just that. The bags have a removable flap which can be swapped with others in a variety of designs. Out now in sizes to suit CSCs and DSLRs, prices start at £75, with spare covers costing £15 to £20.

[www.tenba.com](http://www.tenba.com)



## Phottix Laso for Canon flash

The Laso system from Phottix incorporates Canon's RT Wireless Radio Flash system with radio triggers, so that non-RT kit can be used alongside more expensive RT models. RT flashguns use Canon's built-in wireless triggering system so don't need a receiver to work with the system. The Receiver is £99 and the Transmitter £149. Both are available to buy now. [www.phottix.com](http://www.phottix.com)



## DSLR LENSES

# Full-frame zoom from Pentax

Ricoh has announced its latest pro-quality standard zoom – the HD Pentax-D FA 24-70mm f/2.8 ED SDM WR. When fitted to any Pentax APS-C format DSLRs, the lens offers a focal range equivalent to 37-107mm, but this optic provides full-frame coverage. With no such DSLRs in the current line-up, the observant will note that this means something special is imminent!

Ricoh is remaining tight-lipped about the spec of the full-frame Pentax DSLR under development, but a teaser page on Pentax's website indicates that the camera should arrive in Spring 2016.

Back to the 24-70mm, it offers a fast f/2.8 aperture straight through the zoom range, and features 17 elements arranged into 12 groups. The lens boasts a Supersonic Direct-drive Motor (SDM), which promises a quiet and quick AF performance, and the WR spec indicates it's weather-resistant, too. The front element sports HD coating, which provides a higher transmission of light while suppressing flare and ghosting.

The new 24-70mm f/2.8 will be available by the time you read this, and costs £1149.99. [www.pentax.co.uk](http://www.pentax.co.uk)

## ACCESSORIES

# New tripods from Kenro

Kenro has announced a new line-up of five camera supports – two entry-level tripod kits and two professional ones, plus a monopod.

The standard Travel Tripod is available in two models – 101 and 102. The 101 version has five leg sections and a maximum working height of 1.61m. It weighs 1.12kg and its legs can be folded back by 180° to make it more portable when not in use. The 102 has four leg sections, taking it to a maximum height of 1.58m. It weighs 1.39kg but can support 3kg more than the 101, topping out at 11kg. The 102 model also has the ability to detach one of its legs to use it as a monopod.

The professional Travel Tripods come in two versions – Model 201 and 202. The 201 has four leg sections and reaches 1.64m when fully extended. It weighs 1.58kg and can support 7kg of gear. The 202 weighs a little more at 1.88kg but can support a whopping 12kg.

The Model 301 monopod has a total of four leg sections, reaching a maximum height of 1.72m. It weighs 0.68kg and can take up to 6kg of camera equipment.

The tripods and monopod are available to buy now with prices starting at £59.95.

[www.kenro.co.uk](http://www.kenro.co.uk)



Kenro's 102 tripod is designed for travel use.



**Canon**

Discounted lens kits  
and up to  
£250.00 Cash Back

# High Five



Looking for the best deal on the **Canon EOS 5D** range?

Canon Eos 5D MKIII

Canon Eos 5DS R

Canon Eos 5DS



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🏠 <http://www.wilkinson.co.uk/stores>

**Wilkinson**  
Cameras  
[www.wilkinson.co.uk](http://www.wilkinson.co.uk)



# gear OF THE YEAR 2015

Practical  
Photography DIGITAL  
PHOTO

## Awards

Our Gear of the Year 2015 Awards are the industry's most prestigious honours, and are voted for by a panel of leading experts. Here are the very best photographic products and services from the last 12 months...



## THE GEAR OF THE YEAR 2015 WINNERS...

### Best Adventure Camera

Olympus Stylus  
Tough TG-4  
**Highly Commended:**  
Ricoh WG-5 GPS

### Best Compact Camera

Panasonic Lumix TZ70  
**Highly Commended:**  
Sony HX90

### Best Prestige Compact

Fujifilm X100T  
**Highly Commended:**  
Panasonic Lumix  
LX100

### Best Bridge Camera

Panasonic Lumix  
FZ1000  
**Highly Commended:**  
Nikon Coolpix P610

### Best Entry-level CSC

Olympus PEN E-PL7  
**Highly Commended:**  
Panasonic Lumix GM5

### Best Enthusiast CSC

Samsung NX500  
**Highly Commended:**  
Fuji X-T10

### Best Advanced CSC

Sony α7 II  
**Highly Commended:**  
Olympus OM-D E-M5 MkII

### Best Entry-level DSLR

Nikon D5500  
**Highly Commended:**  
Canon EOS 760D

### Best Enthusiast DSLR

Sony α77 II  
**Highly Commended:**  
Canon EOS 7D MkII

### Best Advanced DSLR

Canon EOS 5DS R  
**Highly Commended:**  
Nikon D750

### Best CSC Lens

Fujifilm XF16-55mm f/2.8  
R LM WR  
**Highly Commended:**  
Tamron 14-150mm  
f/3.5-5.8 Di III

### Best Camera Accessory

Hähnel UniPal Extra  
**Highly Commended:**  
Lexar 64GB Pro 300MB/sec  
UHS-II SDXC card

### Best Specialist CSC Lens

Olympus M.ZUIKO  
ED 40-150mm f/2.8 PRO  
**Highly Commended:**  
Sony FE 90mm f/2.8  
Macro G OSS

### Best DSLR Lens

Tamron SP 15-30mm  
f/2.8 Di VC USD  
**Highly Commended:**  
Nikon 300mm f/4E  
PF ED VR

### Best Specialist DSLR Lens

Sigma 150-600mm  
f/5-6.3 DG OS HSM C  
**Highly Commended:**  
Canon EF 11-24mm  
f/4L USM

### Best Camera Bag

LowePro ProTactic  
350 AW Backpack

### Best Tripod

Manfrotto BeFree Carbon  
Fiber Travel Tripod  
**Highly Commended:**  
Vanguard VEO 265CB

### Best Lighting Accessory

Manfrotto Lumie Series  
Muse LED light  
**Highly Commended:**  
Nissin Air System

### Best Home Printer

Epson SureColor  
SC-P600

### Best Software

Adobe Photoshop  
Lightroom CC

### Best Plug-in

DxO ViewPoint 2.5  
**Highly Commended:**  
Photomatix 5 Pro

### Best Imaging Accessory

Western Digital My  
Passport Wireless  
**Highly Commended:**  
Wacom Cintiq 13HD  
Interactive Pen Display

### Innovation of the Year

Pentax 645Z

### Product of the Year

Canon EOS 5DS R

### Retailer of the Year

Wex Photographic

### Best Photo Finishing Service

PhotoBox

### Gold Service Award

Grays of Westminster

### Gold Service Award

Jessops

### Gold Service Award

SRB Photographic

### Gold Service Award

Wex Photographic

### Gold Service Award

London Camera Exchange

### Gold Service Award

Park Cameras

■ Thank you to everyone who  
voted for this year's awards.  
Turn the page to see the Gear  
of the Year 2015 highlights...





extra power on the go  
**One Charger for all**



# WINNER

4th Gear of the Year  
Award for hähnel



BUILT-IN POWER BANK



CHARGES LI-ION BATTERIES



ADJUSTMENT WHEELS



CHARGES AA BATTERIES



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BE WITHOUT POWER  
AGAIN

ULTRA-STYLISH,  
SUPER CONVENIENT  
UNIVERSAL CHARGER

ONE-STOP  
CHARGING SOLUTION

HIGH-QUALITY,  
VALUED & RESPECTED  
BRAND





## BEST CAMERA ACCESSORY

# HÄHNEL UNIPAL EXTRA

hähnel's pocketable UniPal Extra offers versatile one-stop charging for all of your gadgets, from batteries to iPhones

**E**lectronic gadgets have become an essential part of modern-day photography. Smartphones and tablets allow us to check tomorrow's weather or scout out a location without the need to step outside the front door, while photographic devices like DSLRs and flashguns are used to harness our creativity. But it can feel like an impossible task to keep them all fully charged at 100%.

The charging versatility of hähnel's UniPal Extra really impressed us this year. Its charging contact points can be fine-tuned to nearly all types of Lithium-ion batteries using two fine-adjustment wheels. A sliding mechanism then locks your battery securely in place. It also cleverly adapts the polarity automatically, and a small LCD display conveniently shows the current charge level. There's a bay for a pair of rechargeable Ni-MH AAs, and if your smartphone or tablet is running low you can power it up with the provided USB cable – its 100-240v output means it can be used worldwide too. With hähnel's UniPal Extra you

effectively have all of your chargers in one place, so you need never dig through drawers of plugs and wires to find the specific charger you're after again.

### The ultimate travel accessory

With sleek dimensions and a weight of just 155g, the UniPal Extra is truly pocketable and is a fantastic addition to any kit bag. It's the ultimate travel gadget – if you find your batteries in need of a top up, but there's no plug socket in sight, you can get the power boost you need from its built-in Power Bank. The internal battery charges with a USB cable and its capacity of 2200mAh is more than enough to fully charge a standard DSLR battery.



## Specs

Price £29.99

Automatic polarity  
detection Yes

Internal capacity 2200mAh

Size (WxHxD)  
126x32x76mm

Weight 155g

Web hahnel.ie

**“ADJUSTABLE CONTACT PINS MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO CHARGE ALL TYPES OF DSLR BATTERIES”**



**JESSOPS**  
image is everything

**YOUR**   
**SAFARI**  
*our Namibia*

## Jessops Safari Experience

Jessops have partnered with Your Safari to bring you exclusive premium photographic excursions to Namibia – a mecca for photographers around the world. With two experiences available, The Namibian Highlights Trip and The Etosha Wildlife Experience – you can be sure we have the right trip for you! For more information please visit [www.jessops.com.com/academy](http://www.jessops.com.com/academy) or call 01628 563165







## GOLD SERVICE AWARD

# JESSOPS CAMERA STORE

With services that extend far beyond the sale of cameras, Jessops is committed to helping you make better images

**E**stablished in 1935, Jessops is a photographic retailer that has undergone as dramatic an evolution as the photographic process itself. With 45 stores nationwide, Jessops now offers far more than photography gear and film development. For example, in-store services include digital prints from just 5p, a range of analogue conversion services and even wall art creation in just an hour.

Thanks to Jessops, your photography can now be shared and displayed in a wider variety of ways than ever before. The majority of Jessops branches have photo labs, which offer canvas, box and acrylic prints, as well as high-quality photobooks in partnership with specialist provider Cewe.

Another great addition to the array of services offered is the Jessops Academy. Exciting workshops are designed to show you how to get the best out of your camera and take images you can be proud of. They're open to enthusiasts of any skill level and can also be gifted to the photography fanatic in your life, making for

an unforgettable Christmas present.

For those who've always wanted to go on safari to take nothing but pictures and leave nothing but footprints, Jessops has just announced that it has teamed up with Your Safari to offer tailor-made photography safaris in Namibia. The 10-12 day expeditions will take in stunning landscapes and offer unique wildlife opportunities in the beautiful Etosha National Park, all under the guidance of expert wildlife guides and pro photographers. The first safaris are scheduled for March 2016, with regular tours to follow throughout the year.

With photography experiences for all levels and interests, Jessops has gone beyond providing avid photographers with the gear they need – it now inspires them to shoot their best ever photos too.

**“YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY CAN NOW BE DISPLAYED IN A WIDER VARIETY OF WAYS THAN EVER”**



## Specs

**Number of stores** 45

**Photo printing** Photo books, prints, wall art, 3D wall art, phone cases, gifts (mugs, toys etc),

calendars and cards

**Courses** Jessops Academy

**Web** [jessops.com](http://jessops.com)



# ProTactic Series

## Mission-critical access for CSC kits and Pro DSLR



Customisable interior is designed with adjustable dividers



Tripod straps



Quick access through top zipper feature on ProTactic 180 AW, 200 AW & BP 250 AW



A robust exterior is built with a SlipLock™ compatible strap system for limitless set-ups

Our **award-winning ProTactic series**, including 'Gear of the Year' 2015 for ProTactic 350 AW, expands to bring urban-inspired shoulder bags and a scaled-down backpack to all street shooters, bloggers, photojournalists and adventure travellers. Four new models delivering accessibility, versatility and smart organisation for all kinds of kits – CSC to Pro DSLR.

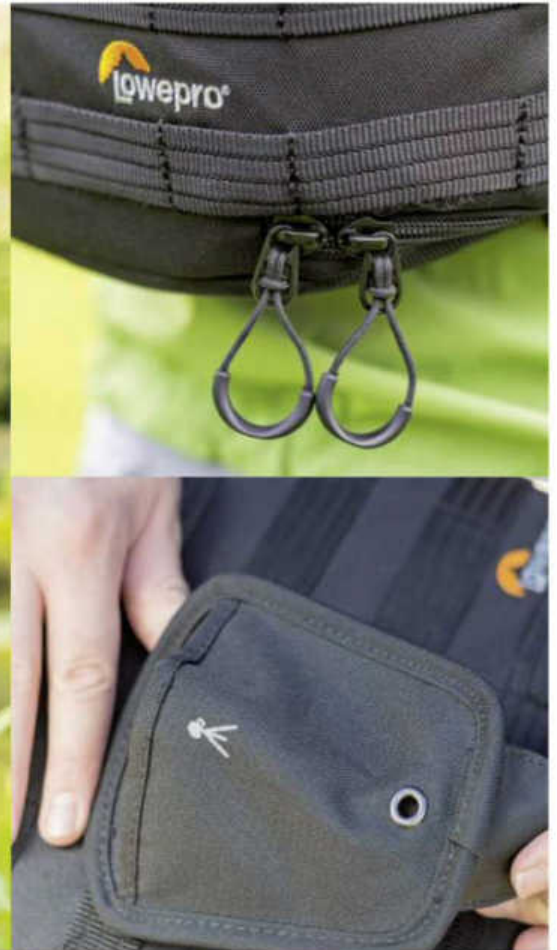


ProTactic 350 AW

Find out more at [lowepro.com/protactic](http://lowepro.com/protactic)  
Follow us on [twitter @loweproUK](https://twitter.com/loweproUK)  
or call **0845 250 0792**.

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## BEST CAMERA BAG

# LOWEPRO PROTACTIC 350AW

Meet the urban-inspired multi-access backpack that combines accessibility, versatility and comfort

**W**e place a lot of trust in our camera bags. We trust them to protect our gear from the strains of everyday use, and also from the worst of the elements. But we also expect them to be comfortable, especially if there are miles to be covered before reaching a destination.

Lowepro's ProTactic 350AW combines versatile functionality with stylish design and is the perfect choice when looking for a bag that will protect kit without attracting unwanted attention. What's more, the ProTactic has a secret weapon in its SlipLock modular accessory system that enables additional holders/pouches for water bottles and tripods to be added when needed. Zips on the rear reveal the main compartment and are an added security measure when the camera is on your back. Alternatively, entry can be gained via access zips on either side or by a zip on the top. Inside the bag, photographers can store two pro DSLRs in the main compartment, along with 2-3 extra lenses or flashguns. A 13in laptop can be

accommodated via a pocket in the top lid, and mesh pockets can hold accessories such as filters, memory cards and batteries. The Velcro dividers can be removed or rearranged to suit your needs.

### Stealth style

Travel photographers will appreciate Lowepro's ActivZone harness system, designed to allow ventilation between bag and body. There are also chest and waist straps to help distribute the weight of the kit around the body, rather than just across the photographer's shoulders. The all-black design makes the ProTactic perfect for urban shooting, and it meets airline carry-on regulations. If you do encounter rain on your journey, there's a dedicated cover to add an extra layer of protection.



## Specs

**Price** £172

**Laptop compartment**

Yes (13in)

**Rain cover** Yes

**Cabin luggage compatible** Yes

**Warranty** Limited lifetime

**Size (WxHxD)** 308x230x430mm

**Weight** 2kg

**Web** [lowepro.co.uk](http://lowepro.co.uk)

**“THE PROTACTIC 350AW WILL PROTECT YOUR KIT WITHOUT ATTRACTING UNWANTED ATTENTION”**





## BEST SPECIALIST CSC LENS

# OLYMPUS 40-150MM F/2.8

With razor-sharp optics and an f/2.8 aperture, this compact Micro Four Thirds telephoto lens triumphs in a tough category.

**T**he weather-sealed Olympus M.Zuiko 40-150mm f/2.8 Pro is a feature-packed telephoto zoom designed for pro-level photographers. At just 160mm in length and weighing 760g, the lens is much more portable and compact than an equivalent pro-DSLR model. However, it makes no sacrifices when it comes to build quality, sporting a premium metal barrel and advanced lens coatings. It also comes with 11 separate weather seals to keep it fully protected from the elements, and is freezeproof for shooting in particularly cold locations.

The 40-150mm has a wide maximum aperture of f/2.8 throughout the entire zoom range, allowing fast shutter speeds, even in low light conditions, as well as a shallow depth-of-field for blurry backgrounds. This makes the lens perfect for sports and wildlife. It's also useful for weddings thanks to its smooth, rapid autofocus system, which has industry-first Dual VCM (Voice Coil Motor). This basically splits the focusing mechanism across two lens groups, creating lightning-fast AF, and with no need for gears operation is also

very quiet. At its widest focal length of 40mm (80mm equivalent) some photographers may even use this versatile telephoto for portraits, with its near-circular nine-blade diaphragm producing smooth bokeh that never distracts from the subject.

The 16 lens elements are aligned in ten groups, and include ZERO-coated HD, ED, EDA and Super EDA glass (a first on an Olympus lens) for reduced chromatic aberration and flare. Control over these optical issues is helped further by a built-in lens hood that retracts over the body for convenient transport and storage. There's also a removable tripod collar built in for extra support. With its Micro Four Thirds mount, the 40-150mm f/2.8 is fully compatible with all current Olympus and Panasonic CSC models.



## Specs

**Price** £1299.99

**Focal range** 40-150mm

**Aperture range** f/2.8-22

**Elements/Groups** 16/10

**Aperture blades** 9

**Min. focus distance** 70cm

**Filter thread** 72mm

**Size (WxL)** 79x160mm

**Weight** 760g

**Web** [olympus.co.uk](http://olympus.co.uk)

**“THE LENS HAS A WIDE F/2.8 APERTURE FOR FAST SHUTTER SPEEDS, EVEN IN LOW LIGHT”**



## BEST ENTRY-LEVEL CSC

## OLYMPUS PEN E-PL7

Stylish, retro design combined with the latest technology means this camera not only looks good, it works even harder.

**C**ompact system cameras have come a long way in a short space of time. And Olympus is right at the forefront of this movement, producing some of the most advanced CSCs currently available.

The Olympus PEN E-PL7 is a slim, lightweight and stylish camera featuring an all-metal body and a leather-look finish on the front. Available in silver, black and white finishes, there's a colour to suit all tastes. A handgrip on the front blends in seamlessly and makes the camera comfortable to hold.

Not just a pretty face, the PEN E-PL7 features a high quality 3in 1037k-dot LCD screen with touch capabilities and a 180° flip mechanism. This makes it easy to use and perfect for taking selfies. If sharing your images online as quickly as possible is important, the E-PL7 also features Wi-Fi connectivity, allowing you to share images directly with your smartphone or tablet for uploading.

The E-PL7 features a 16.1MP Four Thirds Live MOS

sensor, and provides a versatile ISO range of 200-25,600. Action photographers will benefit from the impressive continuous shooting speed of 8fps, while for capturing both fast moving and static subjects the E-PL7's 81 focus points cover the entire sensor. For pure simplicity, and fun, there are 12 Art Filters and seven Art Effects to apply in-camera.

If you're looking for a compact system camera with advanced features, and a competitive price, then look no further than the Olympus PEN E-PL7. Available body only, or in several kit configurations, this camera is perfect for both existing Olympus users and photographers looking to enter the system.



## Specs

**Price** £349.99 (body only)

**Effective pixels** 16.1MP

**Sensor** 4/3in Live MOS

**LCD** 3in tilting touchscreen

**Autofocus** 81-point

**Connectivity** Wi-Fi

**Size (WxHxD)**

115x67x38mm

**Weight** 309g

**Web** [olympus.co.uk](http://olympus.co.uk)

**“ACTION PHOTOGRAPHERS WILL BENEFIT FROM THE IMPRESSIVE 8 FRAMES-PER-SECOND”**







### BEST ADVENTURE CAMERA

# OLYMPUS TOUGH TG-4

Capable of capturing adrenaline-filled moments in extreme conditions, the TG-4 is your ideal adventure companion

**D**esigned to withstand everything thrown at it, the Olympus Tough TG-4 certainly lives up to its name. Crushproof to 100kg, shockproof to 2.1m, freezeproof to -10°C, and waterproof to depths of 15m, it's one of the hardest-wearing compacts we've ever seen. If you're looking for a device that can take a sizeable battering and still keep shooting great quality photographs, then your search is over.

With a 16MP backlit CMOS, a 4x optical zoom that offers a full-frame equivalent focal length of 25-100mm, and a fast aperture of f/2-4.9, the TG-4 is well suited for nearly all subjects and all conditions. As comfortable capturing star trails with its intuitive Live Composite mode, as it is macro shots thanks to an impressive 1cm minimum focus distance, the TG-4 is a surprisingly well-rounded camera.

Packing a 5fps burst shooting mode, GPS, Wi-Fi and Full HD (1080p) video recording, what it gains in durability over other models, it certainly doesn't lose out on when it comes to features. The ISO range stretches from 100 to a respectable 6400, while the camera also

has an LED illuminator and flash to aid with shooting in low light.

Alongside a range of pleasingly large external controls, the TG-4 boasts the Olympus-unique Tap control, which allows it to be operated by tapping the top, bottom and sides of the camera. This means operation is always straightforward and responsive – even when wearing gloves in those extreme conditions! With an aperture-priority shooting mode and RAW capture the camera offers plenty for enthusiasts, while the 28 scene modes put impressive images well within reach of every user.

If you're hitting the sand, sea, snow or air anytime soon, this camera should rightfully be at the very top of your wishlist.



### Specs

**Price** £349.99

**Effective pixels** 16MP

**Lens** 25-100mm  
(equivalent 35mm) f/2-4.9

**Video** Full HD at 30fps

**Battery life** 380 shots

**Connectivity** Wi-Fi, GPS

**Size (WxHxD)**

112x66x31mm

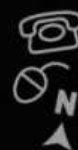
**Weight** 247g

**Web** [olympus.co.uk](http://olympus.co.uk)

**“THE TOUGH TG-4 IS ONE OF THE HARDEST-WEARING COMPACTS WE’VE EVER SEEN”**



# CALUMET



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## Canon EOS 5DS & 5DS R



**NEW**

Canon EOS 5DS Body **£2999.00**  
Canon EOS 5DS R Body **£3199.00**

Canon PRO

## Canon EOS 7D Mark II



Canon EOS 7D Mark II Body **£1299.00**

Canon PRO

## Nikon D810



Nikon D810 Body **£2349.00**

PROFESSIONAL Dealer

## Nikon D750



Nikon D750 Body **£1499.00**

PROFESSIONAL Dealer

## Canon DSLRs

Canon PRO



EOS-1D X Body **£4399.00**



EOS 5D Mark III Body **£2249.00**



EOS 6D Body **£1132.00**  
EOS 6D+24-105mm **£1499.00**



EOS 70D Body **£729.00**  
EOS 70D+18-55mm **£745.00**

## Nikon DSLRs

PROFESSIONAL Dealer



Df Body **£1899.00**  
Df + 50mm f1.8 **£1999.00**  
Available in Black or Silver



D4S Body **£4449.00**



D610 Body **£1184.00**  
D610+24-85mm **£1599.00**



D7200 Body **£849.00**  
D7200+18-105mm **£950.00**

## Fujifilm Cameras

FUJIFILM



X-T1 Graphite Body **£999.00**



X-T1 Black Body **£845.00**



X-100T Black/Silver Body **£839.00**



X-Pro1 Twin Lens Kit (Body + 18mm & 27mm) **£645.00**

## Nikon Lenses



**NEW**

Nikon 300mm  
F4E PF ED VR  
**£1639.00**

14-24mm F2.8G AF-S ED	<b>£1315.00</b>
16-35mm F4.0G AF-S ED VR	<b>£829.00</b>
18-35mm F3.5-4.5G AF-S ED	<b>£519.00</b>
18-200mm F3.5-5.6G AF-S VR II	<b>£549.00</b>
18-300mm F3.5-5.6G AF-S ED VR	<b>£669.00</b>
24-70mm F2.8G AF-S ED	<b>£1199.00</b>
28-300mm F3.5-5.6G AF-S VR	<b>£655.00</b>
70-200mm F2.8G AF-S VR II	<b>£1579.00</b>
70-200mm F4G AF-S ED VR	<b>£789.00</b>
80-400mm F4.5-5.6G ED VR	<b>£1799.00</b>

## Fuji Lenses

**NEW**



Fujifilm XF  
16-55mm F2.8 WR  
**£745.00**

14mm F2.8 XF	<b>£648.00</b>
18mm F2R XF	<b>£359.00</b>
23mm F1.4 XF	<b>£649.00</b>
27mm F2.8 Black or Silver XF	<b>£285.00</b>
35mm F1.4R XF	<b>£371.00</b>
56mm F1.2 XF	<b>£729.00</b>
56mm F1.2 XF APD	<b>£999.00</b>
60mm F2.4R Macro XF	<b>£409.00</b>
10-24mm F4 R XF	<b>£709.00</b>
18-135mm F3.5-5.6 WR	<b>£568.00</b>
50-140mm F2.8 WR OIS	<b>£1099.00</b>
50-230mm F4.5-6.7 OIS Black or Silver XC	<b>£299.00</b>
55-200mm F3.5-4.8 R LM OIS XF	<b>£495.00</b>

## Zeiss Lenses



Otus 55mm F1.4  
**£3170.00**

Distagon 15mm F2.8	<b>£2352.00</b>
Distagon 21mm F2.8	<b>£1449.00</b>
Distagon 28mm F2	<b>£979.00</b>
Planar 50mm F1.4	<b>£559.00</b>
Planar 85mm F1.4	<b>£989.00</b>
APD Sonnar 135mm F2	<b>£1599.00</b>
Makro-Planar 100mm F2	<b>£1449.00</b>
Otus 55mm F1.4	<b>£3170.00</b>

## Canon Lenses

EF 50mm F1.4 USM	<b>£237.00</b>
EF 50mm F1.8 STM	<b>£97.00</b>
EF-S 60mm F2.8 USM Macro	<b>£314.00</b>
EF 85mm F1.2L II USM	<b>£1499.00</b>
EF 100mm F2.8L IS USM Macro	<b>£619.50</b>
EF 8-15mm F4.0L USM Fisheye	<b>£915.00</b>
EF 16-35mm F2.8L USM II	<b>£1064.00</b>
EF 17-40mm F4.0L USM	<b>£499.00</b>
EF 24-70mm F4L IS	<b>£675.00</b>
EF 24-70mm F2.8L II USM	<b>£1400.00</b>
EF 24-105mm F4.0L IS USM	<b>£727.00</b>
EF 24-105mm F3.5-5.6 IS STM	<b>£375.00</b>
EF 70-200mm F2.8L IS USM II	<b>£1499.00</b>
EF 70-200mm F4.0L IS USM	<b>£97.00</b>
EF 70-300mm F4.0-5.6 IS USM	<b>£368.00</b>
EF 70-300mm F4.0-5.6L IS USM	<b>£894.00</b>
EF 100-400mm F4.5-5.6L IS USM II	<b>£1849.00</b>

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# DSLR KITS UNDER £600

You get a lot of camera for entry-level prices these days, so find out which of our trio deserves your hard-earned cash

TEST BY DAN MOLD



**CANON  
750D &  
18-55MM** £549

It would be easy to assume that entry-level DSLRs are exclusively for those just starting out in photography. Their relatively low prices and smaller sizes are less daunting than higher-spec enthusiast cameras, but don't be fooled – today's entry-level models offer an impressive array of features and deliver fantastic image quality.

In the camera industry, technology tends to trickle down from the top, so on up-to-date basic models, you're likely to find features that were reserved for elite flagship cameras just a few years ago. These include powerful image-processing engines, built-in Wi-Fi connectivity for remote shooting via

smartphone, image stabilisation for sharp shots at slower shutter speeds and better Noise control for cleaner shots at higher ISO values. These kinds of features serve up creative shooting options that professional photographers would have yearned for a few years back, so if you're looking to upgrade an older 'advanced' camera, you may find all the bells and whistles you need at this more modest price point.

To find out how good these DSLRs are, we've rounded up the three top entry-level models from Canon, Nikon and Pentax. They've all been released this year so they're hot off the production line.

## How we did the test

The three DSLRs were put through their paces both in our test labs and out in the field. They were all set up in an identical manner to ensure consistency, and the image quality of the files they produced was scrutinised back at the computer screen.

Features were compared to determine value and performance, and their builds and user interfaces were inspected. We also wanted to see how quickly each camera was able to write its JPEG and RAW files. For this, the same high-speed SDHC card was inserted, formatted, and a stopwatch was used to make a note of the average write times.





**PENTAX**  
K-S2 &  
18-55MM £499

**NIKON**  
D5500 & 18-55MM  
VR II LENS £599

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR

### Sensor

Entry-level DSLRs use APS-C sensors which are much larger than the chip you'd find in a point-and-shoot compact. The bigger size produces higher quality images.



### AF systems

When looking through the viewfinder, a DSLR uses its faster phase-detection AF. But when using the screen in Live View, most switch over to a slower contrast-detect AF. Hybrid AF systems offer faster autofocusing when Live View mode is engaged.

### Stabilisation

All DSLRs on test feature image stabilisers to give sharper images at slower shutter speeds. Optical stabilisation is where lens elements move to counter vibrations, while sensor-based systems use motors to move the sensor.



### Screen

Modern camera screens are much more than a window to review images. Some can be flipped out and rotated to help you compose while others have touch capabilities allow you to operate them like a smartphone.



CANON

## EOS 750D WITH 18-55MM £549

Canon's 750D is the largest of the DSLRs in our trio, and unlike the other two its 18-55mm IS STM lens doesn't feature a lens lock, so doesn't retract to save space. This may sound like a disadvantage, but its larger build is reassuring, and the chamfered edges on the handgrip make it very comfortable to hold. Although the Pentax K-S2 and 18-50mm combo is about an inch shallower, you don't have to navigate a lens lock with the Canon so there's one less step between pulling your camera out of the bag and capturing the moment.

Inside the polycarbonate resin and glass fibre body you'll find an APS-C sensor. It's physically the smallest chip on test and has a

### "THE KIT LENS' STEPPING MOTOR GAVE A WHISPER QUIET AF PERFORMANCE"

crop factor of 1.6x, giving the 18-55mm kit lens a film-equivalent of 28-88mm. Although smaller, it shares the same high 24.2Mp resolution as Nikon's D5500, and can shoot JPEGs and RAWs at 6000x4000px.

The brand-new Digic 6 processor gives the 750D a native ISO range of 100-12,800 and this can be further expanded to 25,600. The shutter can be set from 30secs to 1/4000sec and there's a Bulb mode for ultra-long exposures. Its maximum burst is 0.4fps slower than the Pentax K-S2, topping out at 5fps.

When it came to focusing, the 750D didn't disappoint. The kit lens' Stepping Motor (STM) gave a whisper-quiet performance and is ideal for video clips as there is little to no AF whir picked up on the internal microphone. The Hybrid CMOS AF III is quick when using the viewfinder, but remarkably it's also quick when using Live View too – something its rivals couldn't keep pace with. Nineteen cross-type AF points are spread across the viewfinder.

The manual focus ring sits at the front of the lens so it's easy to find and there are AF/MF and Image Stabilisation switches on the lens barrel. Image Stabilisation gives sharp shots at shutter speeds up to 4-stops slower. A minor issue is the switches are a little small and the AF/MF switch sits a little too high up, so it's quite awkward to find and use when your eye is to the viewfinder.

The clean design means it's easy to set up and get shooting. The Mode dial sits on top with M, Av, Tv and P creative modes, and an



Canon's 750D sports a 24.2Mp sensor and features both Wi-Fi and NFC connectivity.



The Hybrid CMOS AF III system is fast and accurate, even when using the rear touchscreen to compose in Live View mode.



integrated power switch sits around it. The shutter lies comfortably under the index finger when holding the grip, though the Command dial used to change exposure settings is higher up, and a little awkwardly placed. A secondary dial on the rear for the thumb would have been a nice addition.

On the back you'll find the 3in 1040k-dot Clear View II TFT screen. It can be flipped out and rotated which helps compose shots from low, high or awkward angles. It's a touchscreen so you can navigate menus, tap to focus and flick through photos just as you would on a smartphone or tablet.

As one of Canon's latest DSLRs, the 750D comes fully kitted out with Wi-Fi and NFC so you can pair it to a smart device when you want to shoot remotely or upload shots.

### DIGITAL PHOTO Verdict

The 750D has some great features including the best AF on test and a touchscreen that flips out and rotates. It's a little larger than the others but overall it's a solid camera that delivers great images at a good price.

FEATURES & BUILD  
PERFORMANCE  
IMAGE QUALITY  
VALUE FOR MONEY  
OVERALL VERDICT





NIKON

## D5500 W/18-55MM VR II LENS £599



A new monocoque structure allows the D5500 to be a little more compact than previous entry-level Nikons, and the retractable lens helps its portability too. With a body weight of 470g, the D5500 is the lightest DSLR on test. It's also close to the Pentax K-S2 in size, making both smaller than Canon's 750D.

The APS-C sensor is physically a little larger than the one found in Canon's 750D, despite sharing the same resolution of 24.2Mp. It's 4Mp higher in resolution than the Pentax K-S2 too, though shares its 1.5x crop factor, so the 18-55mm kit lens behaves like a 27-82.5mm in film terms. Tasked with processing the 6000x4000px JPEGs and RAWs is an Expeed 4 engine – the same as

The D5500 offers 24.2Mp and uses the same Expeed 4 processor as Nikon's flagship D4s.



### “THE D5500'S INTERFACE IS EXTREMELY INTUITIVE AND USER-FRIENDLY”

used in Nikon's flagship D4s DSLR. It shoots a maximum burst at 5fps, though this slows when shooting higher-quality, 14-bit RAWs. The shutter range stretches from 30secs to 1/4000sec and a Bulb mode is on hand for manual long exposures. A native ISO range of 100-25,600 is on board.

Focusing can be achieved through the optical viewfinder or using the 3.2in 1036k-dot screen. Touch capability means you can tap to focus, though the Live View AF performance is notably slower than when using the viewfinder, as contrast-detect AF is employed when the screen is used. A slight AF whir was picked up by the internal microphone when recording movies, which was a little disappointing.

The screen flips outwards and can be rotated by 170° to assist in framing. To the right of the screen is the D-Pad which you can use to select any of 39 AF points – nine of which offer the faster cross-type sensors.

Turn your attention to the top-plate and you'll find the Mode dial with MASP modes, and a shutter button at the front of the grip with an integrated power switch around it. At the rear of the grip is a Command dial which sits flush with the top-plate. The overall build is narrower than previous entry-level Nikon models and this means the grip becomes deeper and more secure in the hand. It feels



The 3.2in touchscreen allows you to tap to focus, and Wi-Fi connectivity lets you pair it with a smartphone or tablet.



very comfortable to hold and operate, and the push-lock on the lens is larger and smoother to operate than the option found on the Pentax K-S2.

The user interface is one of the best we've seen in an entry-level model. It's clear and easy to operate, and animations on the screen such as an aperture opening or closing will be a huge help to those learning the basics of photography. The wireless settings were easy to operate too, and the D5500 comes with Wi-Fi to pair it with a smart device. With a free app you can compose and adjust settings from a smartphone screen or transfer images to view them on a larger monitor.

### DIGITAL PHOTO Verdict

Ergonomic and user-friendly is the best way to describe the D5500. It's compact but easy to set up and use. The AF is a little slow in Live View, but its stellar image quality and performance was enough to secure top marks.

FEATURES & BUILD  
PERFORMANCE  
IMAGE QUALITY  
VALUE FOR MONEY  
OVERALL VERDICT





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PENTAX

**K-S2** £499

A sense of fun has been built into many Pentax DSLRs over the last few years. From customisable body colours to flashing LED lights in the handgrip, there have been many innovations decorating recent models. But the latest K-S2 seems to split from the pack. It feels more mature and serious, with a fully accomplished spec sheet. And it's also the world's smallest weather-sealed DSLR.

With the K-S2, there's no better place to start than its tank-like build. One hundred seals protect the electronics from the elements – reassuring if you're caught out in the rain. Its size makes it the most portable DSLR on test, and the lens boasts a lock allowing it to compress down into a smaller form when stored. The lens-lock button itself is quite small and fiddly to operate, but when retracted the lens and camera combo is an inch shallower than Canon's 750D. One thing to note with the lens is that its widest aperture is a little slower than the others, opening to f/4 at the 18mm end. Also, while its rivals reach 55mm at the long end, this kit optic stops a little shorter at 50mm. But as a WR lens it's fully weather-sealed to match the body.

Although the most compact, it's the heaviest camera here with a body weight of 618g – that's 31% heavier than Nikon's D5500. While it's rugged, outdoorsy and durable, it's not as comfortable to hold as the others. With little rubber to add comfort, the stark, angled edges press into the hands. But that said, the sharp lines do have a certain aesthetic quality.

If you manage to get inside the K-S2, which is sealed as tightly shut as Alcatraz, you'll find a 20.12Mp APS-C sensor. It has the same physical dimensions and 1.5x crop factor as Nikon's chip, so the 18-50mm has a film equivalent of 27-75mm. But the sensor's resolution is 4Mp lower than its rivals. It does, however, have a feat the others can't match. The sensor itself is stabilised, so you can attach any Pentax K-mount lens and benefit from sharper shots at slower shutter speeds. And it means you don't have to shell out for optically stabilised lenses when upgrading.

The Prime M II engine processes the 5472x3648px RAW and JPEG images and there's the option to record RAWs in Adobe's universally-friendly DNG format.

The processor also grants the widest ISO range which spans from 100 to 51,200. It shoots a fraction faster than the others too, with a burst rate of 5.4fps. The top shutter speed is faster as well, with 1/6000sec offered. This can be slowed to 30secs or put into Bulb mode for custom long exposures.

With the AF motor incorporated into the body rather than the lens, AF performance



The Pentax K-S2 is the world's smallest weather-sealed DSLR and features 100 seals to protect it from dust, sand, rain and snow.

**“THERE'S THE  
OPTION TO SHOOT  
RAW IN ADOBE'S  
DNG FORMAT”**

has been slower and quite noisy on some Pentax DSLRs. But this wasn't the case with the K-S2, and the AF was quick and smooth. It's not completely silent, but it's slick. It has 11 AF points, and all feature the more accurate cross-type sensors.

The rear screen flips out and can be rotated to assist in composition – an impressive feat considering this is a weather-sealed DSLR. But it isn't a touchscreen like the others and it also offers the lowest resolution on test at 921k-dot, so images didn't look quite as crisp.

On the top a large Mode dial offers the standard creative modes plus an Sv and a TAv mode where you set the Aperture and Shutter Speed while the camera works out the ISO. It's the only DSLR here with twin command dials – a great feature for quickly dialling in exposure settings.

**DIGITAL PHOTO Verdict**

Weather-sealing, sensor-based stabilisation and a flip-out LCD are all good reasons to buy the K-S2. But, stopping it from reaching full marks was its user interface and image quality that couldn't keep pace with the others.

**FEATURES & BUILD**  
**PERFORMANCE**  
**IMAGE QUALITY**  
**VALUE FOR MONEY**  
**OVERALL VERDICT**





## The cameras' image quality compared



### CANON 750D

Image quality ★★★★★

ISO 400



ISO 1600



ISO 6400



#### Sharpness

Image from the 750D impressed at all focal lengths. The 18mm end delivered a strong centre sharpness and the best corners on test when shooting wide open or at a mid aperture such as f/8. At 18mm the 18-55mm STM lens succumbed to as much barrel distortion as the others, though there was no sign of chromatic aberration across the frame. Sharpness softened a little when closing the aperture further. At f/14 Nikon's D5500 overtook it for sharpness across the image. At 55mm, barrel distortion vanished and the 750D gave the sharpest pics when shooting wide open.

#### ISO performance

At low ISO values the 750D gave very clean, clear images with low amounts of Noise (coloured grain and speckling over the frame). Detail was a little bit softer when compared to its rivals, potentially because unlike the other two cameras, the 750D features an Optical Low Pass Filter in front of the sensor. This slightly blurs the results to prevent the adverse effect of moiré patterns from appearing in highly detailed areas.

At higher ISO settings above 1600, shots taken were progressively more 'muddy' and detail suffered with a waxy appearance.

### NIKON D5500

Image quality ★★★★★

ISO 400



ISO 1600



ISO 6400



#### Sharpness

At the wide, 18mm end of the lens we saw a small amount of barrel distortion, though to be fair, all DSLRs featured in the test showed this. Shooting with the aperture wide open at f/3.5 we noted a strong, centre sharpness. The corners were free from chromatic aberration (fringeing), but they were a little soft and didn't sharpen up fully until f/8, though even here, Canon's 750D was a touch sharper.

At an aperture of f/14 the D5500 took the lead in sharpness, giving a strong performance from the middle to edges of the frame.

#### ISO performance

The D5500 gave the best overall ISO performance of the three DSLRs we assessed. It captured a staggering level of detail even at high ISOs, and though the speckling of digital Noise crept in at ISO 400, it was well controlled and very fine, and only truly visible when the image was magnified to 100% in editing software. At ISO 1600 both chrominance (colour) and luminance (mono) Noise was evident, though again it showed as a fine grain that wasn't unattractive. Overall, detail was captured at an impressively high level.

### PENTAX K-S2

Image quality ★★★★★

ISO 400



ISO 1600



ISO 6400



#### Sharpness

The 18-50mm lens has the shortest focal range on test and a slightly slower max aperture of f/4 at the wide end. With the lens fully back to 18mm and the aperture wide open, we saw slightly soft corners, even when comparing this f/4 aperture to its rivals at f/3.5. The results were the only images to show significant purple and green chromatic aberration in the corners throughout the aperture range.

At the 50mm end the chromatic aberration disappeared, though the centre and corners were still a little softer than its rivals at f/5.6.

#### ISO performance

We saw an excellent ISO performance from the K-S2, potentially owing to its use of a larger APS-C sensor with fewer megapixels doing the work. Digital Noise was kept to a minimum, even at a high ISO value of 1600, though details were a little softer than those seen on the Nikon D5500. This may be due to the levels of in-camera Noise Reduction applied to the JPEGs. The colour speckling of chrominance Noise was battled off until ISO settings of 6400 were used, showing an impressive performance.



## Specification comparison chart

	CANON EOS 750D WITH 18-55MM	NIKON D5500 WITH 18-55MM VR II	PENTAX K-S2 WITH 18-50MM WR
STREET PRICE	£549	£599	£499
SENSOR SIZE	APS-C CMOS (22.3x14.9mm)	APS-C CMOS (23.5x15.6mm)	APS-C CMOS (23.5x15.6mm)
RESOLUTION	24.2Mp (6000x4000px)	24.2Mp (6000x4000px)	20.12Mp (5472x3648)
LENS MOUNT	Canon EF-S / EF	Nikon F	Pentax K
AF SYSTEM	Hybrid CMOS AF III	Phase and Contrast detection	Safox X Phase and Contrast detection
AF POINTS	19 cross-type	39 (9 cross-type)	11 (9 cross-type)
FOCUSING MODES	AI Focus, One Shot, AI Servo, Manual	Single Servo, Continuous Servo, AF-A Auto, MF	Single AF, Continuous AF, Auto AF and MF
METERING	Evaluative, Partial, Spot, Centre-weighted	Matrix, Centre-weighted, Spot	Segmented, Centre-weighted and Spot
BURST RATE	5fps	5fps	5.4fps
FLASH	Pop-up	Pop-up	Pop-up
ISO RANGE	100-12,800 (25,600 expanded)	100-25,600	100-51,200
SHUTTER RANGE	30secs-1/4000sec & Bulb	30secs-1/4000sec & Bulb	30secs-1/6000sec & Bulb
VIEWFINDER	95%	95%	100%
MONITOR	1040k-dot 3in Clear View II touchscreen	1036.8k-dot 3.2in vari-angle touch TFT	3in 921k-dot vari-angle Air gapless LCD
VIDEO	Full HD	Full HD	Full HD
<b>WRITE-TO-CARD SPEEDS</b>			
SINGLE JPEG	0.57sec	0.7secs	1.05secs
CONTINUOUS JPEG	Buffer never filled	Buffer never filled	Buffer never filled
SINGLE RAW	0.94sec	0.87sec	1.17secs
CONTINUOUS RAW	2secs (8 pics)	2.4secs (20 pics)	5.2secs (10 pics)
STORAGE	SD, SDHC or SDCX	SD, SDHC or SDCX	SD, SDHC or SDCX
DIMENSIONS	131.9x100.7x77.8mm	124x97x70mm	122.5x91x72.5mm
WEIGHT (BODY ONLY)	555g	470g	618g
VISIT	canon.co.uk	europe-nikon.com	ricoh-imaging.co.uk
FEATURES & BUILD	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
PERFORMANCE	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
IMAGE QUALITY	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★

## The results are in...

### CANON EOS 750D WITH 18-55MM £549

The 750D really impressed this month. Its stand-out feature was focusing which was fast and very quiet even when using Live View. It is substantially larger than the other two DSLRs we looked at, but this isn't necessarily a bad thing. Image quality was very good and file write times were quick, too. Just edging ahead of the 750D this month is Nikon's D5500 which has a slightly friendlier interface and more ergonomic design. That said,



if you've already invested in Canon lenses, this isn't enough of a reason to switch sides. It's a very capable DSLR, and at £549 with 18-55mm lens it offers excellent value.

### NIKON D5500 WITH 18-55MM VR II LENS £599

Nikon's D5500 is a brilliant camera that breaks the boundaries of what a DSLR should be. Its compact form factor makes it extremely portable, and it's comparable to a large CSC in size. It's also very user-friendly so it's certainly a camera to consider if you're a newcomer to photography. The articulating screen is a joy to use and makes it much easier to compose when shooting above head height or at waist level.



Write-to-card speeds were impressive and the image quality was first-class. The D5500 fought a hard battle but it earned the Gold this month.

### PENTAX K-S2 WITH 18-50MM LENS £499

The Pentax comes loaded with features that are truly useful, such as the weather sealing that lets you continue shooting in a downpour and its sensor-based image stabilisation which allows any attached lens to benefit from sharper shots at slower shutter speeds. But its autofocus was notably slower when using Live View, and its image quality wasn't quite as refined when compared to our winner.



That said, the K-S2 is very

well-built and despite being the heaviest camera here, it's also the smallest. If you're an outdoorsy type and need a camera that can cope with whatever the weather throws at you, shortlist this model.



SONY ALPHA 7R II / CSC / £2599 BODY ONLY

# FLAGSHIP ALPHA

Sony's top Alpha 7R II model is packed with features to take on full-frame DSLRs

BY DAN MOLD

**W**hen you think of a conventional Compact System Camera, the first idea to pop into your head is likely to be a small, pocketable model with interchangeable lenses. Sony's A7R II is big for a CSC, but smaller than pro DSLRs. Its 42.2Mp full-frame chip will certainly give Canon's 50.6Mp 5DS and Nikon's 36.3Mp D810 a run for their money, especially when you consider it's 59% lighter and several centimetres leaner than the latter in all dimensions.

Add in sensor-shift image stabilisation, 4K video recording and a new Back Illuminated

sensor and you have some attractive features taking the CSC into the professional domain.

## Features & Build

The dust and moisture resistant magnesium alloy body protects the 42.2Mp Exmor R CMOS sensor, and has a reinforced E mount for heavier optics. The new chip has 5.8Mp more than the A7R I, outputting shots at 7952x5304px. It's a Back Illuminated (BI) sensor so the photo-sensitive surface sits above a layer of wiring rather than below it, and this is said to deliver cleaner images and give a data output 3.5x faster than the prior

model. 5-axis sensor-based image stabilisation gives sharper shots and is the icing on the cake.

The Bionz X processor paves the way for an ISO range of 100-25,600 which can be further expanded to 50-102,400, and there's a shutter speed range of 30-1/8000sec with a Bulb mode to boot. A burst can be fired at 5fps, putting the camera in line with Canon's 5DS R and Nikon's D810. These DSLRs do have silent and quiet modes, but this only dampens the 'mirror slap' so the shutter is still audible. The A7R II has a Silent Shooting mode which uses an electronic shutter, so it really lives up to its name.

4K video offers four times the detail of Full HD and can be recorded internally, and also allows 8Mp stills to be extracted from the video stream. The Super

35mm mode records a smaller, cropped 15Mp area of the sensor for extra reach, but stills can also be pulled from this at 8Mp.

The Fast Hybrid AF has 399 AF points across 45% of the frame. The usual Automatic, Single and Continuous AF modes are on board, in addition to Manual and Direct Manual Focus (DMF).

The Electronic Viewfinder (EVF) has 2359.3k dot and replaces the bulky mirror and pentaprism system found in DSLRs. A Multi Interface Shoe sits above it for using flashguns or an accessory microphone, while

**"THE A7R II HAS A SILENT SHOOTING MODE THAT IS IDEAL FOR EVENTS AND WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY"**

there's a Mode dial with MASP modes and integrated pin-lock to the right. There's also an Exposure Compensation dial with three stops of positive and negative latitude, two custom buttons and twin Command dials to set your exposure values. The shutter button now sits further forward on a more pronounced grip, it has a power switch built around it for quick setup too.

On the back you'll find the 3in, 1228.8k-dot TFT LCD which can be tilted up by 107° or down by 41° to assist awkward framing.

On the left, you'll find 3.5mm jack ports for headphones and an external mic, as well as a Micro USB port which can be used to charge the camera. The A7R II comes kitted out for wireless with integrated Wi-Fi and NFC.

## Test shot

## 100% detail

## Image quality Detail & lens

To give optimum clarity, the 42.2Mp sensor doesn't feature a detail-softening Optical Low-Pass Filter (OLPF). We tested the A7R II with 28-70mm f/3.5-5.6 OSS lens and noted some barrel distortion at 28mm in the RAWs but not in the JPEGs. Strangely, at 28mm we saw a small amount of fringing and vignetting in the JPEGs at f/3.5 but not in the RAWs, possibly hinting that in-camera processing had added excessive contrast. We saw no fringing at 70mm, but we saw some pincushion distortion in the RAWs but not in the JPEGs.



Sony's flagship A7R II CSC boasts 5-axis stabilisation, 4K video and a new full-frame sensor.



## Key features of the Sony Alpha 7R II

### Image stabilisation

The full-frame sensor boasts SteadyShot Inside technology, so images can be shot at up to 4.5 stops slower than normal.

### Ergonomic layout

The dials, interface and buttons are easy to navigate. There are also 10 customisable buttons which can be assigned to 64 different functions.



### Electronic Viewfinder

Sony's XGA OLED Tru-Finder takes up much less space than a conventional optical finder and has a Zeiss T\* coating and 2359.3k-dot resolution to enhance the clarity of the display.



### Tiltable display

The rear 3in, 1228.8k-dot LCD screen can be pulled out and tilted up by 107° or down by 41° to help you compose when hand-holding above a crowd or near to the ground.

## Quickspec

**Street price** £2599 (body only)

**Resolution** 42.2Mp (7952x5304px)

**Sensor** Full-frame Exmor R CMOS (35.9x24mm)

**Lens mount** Sony E

**Autofocus system** Fast Hybrid AF

**AF points** 399

**Focusing modes** Automatic AF, Single Shot AF, Continuous AF, Direct Manual Focus, Manual Focus

**Metering** Multi-segment, Centre-weighted or Spot

**Burst rate** 5fps **Flash** No

**ISO range** 100-25,600 (expandable to 50-102,400)

**Shutter range** 30-1/8000sec & bulb

**Viewfinder** 2359.3k-dot Electronic

Viewfinder XGA, 100% coverage

**Monitor** 3in, 1228.8k-dot TFT LCD

**Video** 4K 3840x2160 @ 30p

**Write speeds** 1.2sec (RAW), 0.8sec (Large Fine JPEG)

**Storage** SD, SDHC, SDXC, Memory Stick Pro Duo

**Weight** 582g (body only)

**Dimensions** (WxHxD)

126.9x95.7x60.3mm

**Visit** [www.sony.co.uk](http://www.sony.co.uk)



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## Performance

The shutter on the original A7R sat awkwardly high up on the top-plate, and the grip was quite shallow. Sony has remedied this with a deeper grip for a better purchase, and the shutter has been placed further forward to fall naturally under your index finger. The shutter is a little 'spongy' and doesn't click firmly, so it's difficult to know if you've fully depressed it. That said, the rest of the build is tank-like. The magnesium alloy body feels like it could really take a thrashing, but at £2599 for the body we'd expect no less.

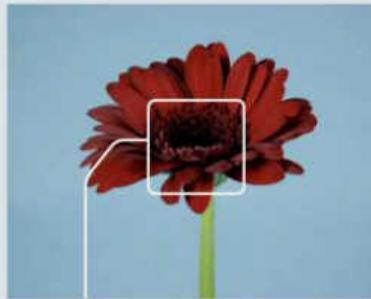
The button layout is ergonomic and the interface is easy to navigate. There's also a total of 10 customisable buttons peppered over the body which can be assigned to any of 64 frequently used functions – though some functions can only be assigned to specific buttons.

Sony's SteadyShot Inside technology moves the sensor on five axes to reduce camera shake when hand-holding. This did a great job and delivered sharp results at slower shutter speeds.

The 3in LCD can be tilted out but it's quite thin, so it can be tricky to get a nail under it get it out. But we'd rather have it than not as it's a feature its pro DSLR rivals miss out on. It's low-key

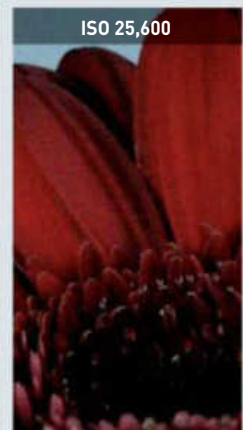
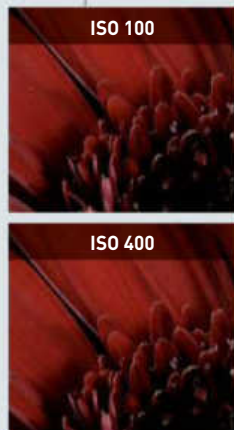


Almost all lenses benefit from the A7R II's SteadyShot sensor, including the 11 full-frame optics in the current FE lens line up.



## Image quality ISO, JPEG & RAW image test results

The A7R II has a Back illuminated sensor designed for less digital Noise at high ISOs and we were impressed with the results. We saw details soften in JPEGs at ISO 800, and this is also where we saw digital Noise creep into the RAW files. The A7R II captured an impressive amount of detail at ISO 3200 in both JPEGs and RAW, and were usable with a little Noise Reduction applied. ISOs of 6400 and above showed heavy traces of Noise.



## "THE ARTICULATING LCD SCREEN IS GREAT FOR COMPOSING AND IS A FEATURE YOU DON'T GET WITH SIMILARLY-PRICED FULL-FRAME DSLRS"

size and the ability to shoot from the hip makes it good for street and reportage imagery.

A motion sensor engages the EVF automatically when brought up to eye-level. The responsive display shows you the exact pic you'll get, even with exposure compensation dialled in or an arty filter turned on.

Battery life remains an area of concern. You can take 340 shots using the LCD screen, or just 290 with the more power-hungry EVF, so the A7R II runs out of juice much quicker than its rivals. In comparison, Nikon's D810 runs 3.5x longer from a single charge. Sony's answer is to ship the A7R II with a spare battery, though the symmetrical battery shape makes it all-too-easy to insert it the wrong way round!

The A7R II has the widest AF coverage of any full-frame camera with 399 phase-detect points covering 45% of the sensor. The Fast Hybrid AF is said to be 40%

quicker than the A7R I, and though accurate, it wasn't the fastest AF we'd seen from a CSC, taking a moment to lock on – even in bright conditions.

### Value for money

The A7R II's closest CSC rivals are the 24.3Mp A7 II at £1244 and the 12.2Mp A7S II at £2499 from

to see the same stable, but its true rivals are pro DSLRs. It sits between Nikon's £2349 D810 and Canon's £3199 5DS R in both price and resolution, so although it may seem expensive, it's not bad value. These DSLRs have an optical viewfinder and larger build, but neither have 4K video, a Back-Illuminated sensor, tilting screen or sensor-based image stabilisation. All told, the A7R II is a tempting proposition if you're splashing a serious amount of cash on a pro-level camera.

## DIGITAL Photo Verdict

It was hard to mark the A7R II down for Features & Build. The spec list is fully-fledged and outdoes its DSLR rivals in many areas. We'd have liked to see a secondary SD card slot, but huge capacities are available, so the camera did enough to warrant five stars in this criterion.

Performance was good, and we were particularly impressed by the ability to shoot silently and record 4K videos – two genuine reasons to go for the A7R II over a DSLR. But it was let down by a poor battery life, so this was one area it fell short of the mark.

Its image quality matches its rivals in the DSLR camp. The full-frame chip in a portable body is remarkable and deserves five stars.

The A7R II seems steep at £2599, but if you're looking for a smaller full-frame body it is good value. Just bear in mind that there are only 11 full-frame optics for it at present.

Features & build	★★★★★
Performance	★★★★★
Image quality	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★
Overall score	★★★★★



SIGMA 24-35MM DG HSM F/2 ART / WIDE-ANGLE ZOOM LENS/ £949

# FAST FULL-FRAME FUN

Sigma's pro-spec wide-angle lens has a fast f/2 aperture and robust build-quality, but should you be adding it to your wishlist?

BY MATTY GRAHAM

**T**he 24-35mm f/2 A is part of Sigma's 'Art' line of optics and works with both full-frame and APS-C format cameras. The lens is available in Sigma, Nikon and Canon fits, and breaks new ground – it's the world's first full-frame zoom lens on the market with a f/2 aperture. This puts the 24-35mm in a unique position. Although not quite matching the super fast f/1.4 aperture of Sigma's 24mm (£699) or 35mm (£636) Art lenses, its widest f/2 aperture is still plenty to blur backgrounds, and its ability to fine-tune composition without moving your feet is a feat its prime siblings miss out on.

The audience for this lens is vast and diverse. Photographers

portrait photographers. So, there's definitely a big market for this special lens, but how does it fare in the field?

## Features & Build

What first strikes you about this lens is its size. At 87.6x122.7mm it certainly isn't small and doesn't look much different from a 24-70mm optic. Along with the girth, comes the weight – the lens tips the scales at 940g, which weighs around the same as a

Canon 5D MkIII and is just 40g lighter than a Nikon D810. The reasons for this weight are two-fold. Firstly, the build quality is impressively robust. This is a quality-built lens with no plastic bits in sight. Secondly, to achieve that f/2 aperture, there's a lot of glass – 18 elements in 13 groups, to be precise. One of the elements is Sigma's top-flight FLD glass which delivers a high light transmission and corrects for chromatic aberration.

The rugged build of the 24-35mm continues with the large zoom and focus rings either side of the focus distance window. Perfectly-sized for cold fingers to grip the textured

rubber on a frosty morning, the oversized grips are also useful when fine-tuning focus when recording video. There's only one switch (AF/MF) on the side of the lens as it doesn't feature any image stabilisation technology, but this too is large and easy to activate. A close focusing distance of just 28cm allows you to get really close to a subject for frame-filling images. The 24-35mm also comes with features that aren't immediately visible. It can be connected to Sigma's USB dock (costing from £40), which allows the firmware of the lens to be updated and the focusing to be calibrated and fine-tuned.

## "THE SIGMA 24-35MM IS THE WORLD'S FIRST FULL-FRAME ZOOM LENS WITH AN APERTURE OF F/2"

with full-frame cameras will consider this optic for landscape use, while street shooters will see the benefit of the bokeh from the f/2 aperture. The lens focuses internally, making it suitable for using filters with ease, and the AF is whisper quiet, making it great for video use too. Fitted to an APS-C camera, it gives an effective focal length of 36-52mm (38-56 for Canon), bringing it into the sights of

24mm



At 24mm on a full-frame camera, the lens captures stunning clarity and detail.

35mm



## Image quality zoom detail

Overall image quality is extremely good. Images are razor sharp, even when zoomed to 200% in Photoshop. Colour rendition is also superb, delivering accurate hues without a hint of a colour cast. From our lens chart test, we discovered obvious vignetting at f/2, but this disappeared at f/4. Some photographers will appreciate this heavy vignette effect and those that don't will be able to quickly remove it in RAW software. Barrel distortion is evident at 24mm, but this isn't abnormal on a wide-angle zoom. F/8 returned the sharpest results with fringing well controlled.



The Sigma 24-35mm f/2 combines the speed and quality of a prime with the versatility of a zoom.



## “ALTHOUGH THE ZOOM RANGE OF THIS LENS IS QUITE SMALL, ITS VERSATILITY MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE OUT IN THE FIELD”

### Performance & handling

This is a pro-spec lens and certainly acts like one. Sigma's Hypersonic Motor technology (HSM) works well, ensuring the lens locks onto subjects quickly and quietly. The weight of the lens does tell on the arms after a full morning's shooting, but if it's attached to a tripod you'll have no worries.

Although the zoom range is quite small, it does make a difference out in the field. The ability to fine-tune your framing by simply zooming in and out rather than having to move a

tripod back and forwards shouldn't be overlooked. The lens tops out at a minimum aperture of f/16, but still stays incredibly sharp (see image quality panel). It's a great feeling to be able to open up to f/2 and take advantage of the fast shutter speeds and beautiful bokeh created by the rounded diaphragm blades.

### Value for money

At £949, this lens is a big investment for anyone. But the combined price of Sigma's 24mm f/1.4 and 35mm f/1.4 Art primes

is significantly more at £1335, plus they're 41% heavier in your bag. With this in mind the 24-35mm f/2 is very good value. It focuses quickly and quietly, covers the focal range without the need to change lenses and its image quality shone out too. If you're on the hunt for a wide, versatile lens this one is a gem!

### DIGITAL PHOTO Verdict

Although pricey and a little heavy, the Sigma 24-35mm pushes zoom lenses to new heights with its robust build, image quality and versatility.

Rating



### Quickspec

**Street price** £949  
**Fittment** Canon, Nikon, Sigma  
**Construction** 18 elements in 13 groups  
**Angle of view** 84.1-63.4 degrees  
**Diaphragm blades** Nine (rounded diaphragm)  
**Maximum aperture** f/2  
**Minimum aperture** f/16  
**Minimum focus distance** 28cm  
**Maximum magnification** 1:4.4  
**Image stabilisation** No  
**Filter size** 82mm  
**Dimensions** 87.6x122.7mm  
**Weight** 940g  
**Visit** [www.sigma-imaging-uk.com](http://www.sigma-imaging-uk.com)



PORTRAITPRO 15 / PORTRAIT EDITING SOFTWARE / FROM £29.95

# SAVING FACE

We take a look at the new features Anthropics has added to its renowned portrait retouching software

TEST BY ANDY HEATHER

**P**ortraitPro 15 Standard Edition is a software package for Windows and Mac that allows you to improve your portrait photos by removing blemishes from skin, adding impact to eyes, whitening teeth, fixing distortion and even adding makeup.

It's available in Standard, Studio and Studio Max versions. The latter two editions include Photoshop and Lightroom plug-ins as well as RAW and DNG support. The Studio Max version also sports a full batch mode to speed up your workflow. By applying and combining the different presets, you can improve your portraits in a

fraction of the time it would take you to make similar edits in Photoshop. With the ability to transform a photo in a single click, Anthropics claims PortraitPro 15 is the world's easiest portrait enhancement software, and based on our tests this claim may well hold water.

## What does it do?

**Eye and Teeth Whitening** These are two elements of portrait retouching that are often overdone and can cause even billboard and fashion magazine covers to look over-processed and unrealistic. Luckily, PortraitPro 15 allows you to tweak the strength of the effects with

easy-to-use sliders until you have as much (or as little) whitening as your heart desires.

**Lighting** For our money, PortraitPro 15's lighting tools are one of its standout features and deserve special mention. Realistically relighting a portrait in post-processing can prove tricky for even a seasoned Photoshop retoucher, but the

good results that are so realistic we'll bet they could fool any imaging professional.

## Removing Blemishes

A professional retoucher will be the first to tell you that cleaning up blemishes is best done by hand to avoid accidentally removing pores and natural skin texture that keep images feeling 'real'. Nobody wants to end up with

## "PORTRAITPRO 15'S LIGHTING TOOLS ARE ONE OF ITS STANDOUT FEATURES AND DESERVE SPECIAL MENTION"

software streamlines the process by allowing you to position a virtual light with sliders that control the vertical and horizontal axes. Placing this light above the head, under the chin or elsewhere creates spectacularly

unrealistically smooth or 'waxy' skin. However, the time may have come for those pros to re-evaluate automatic portrait improvement software, as PortraitPro 15 is smart enough to remove blemishes without taking a scorched-earth approach to your model's skin pores. This is a very welcome development and makes the software a much more attractive proposition for amateur users and more discerning pro shooters as well.

## Skin Colouring



The new Skin Coloring Controls allow you to change the temperature, tint and exposure of your shot, as you would in Lightroom. In addition to this, there are also sliders for Cheek Colouring and Tan. That means you can make global adjustments and localised adjustments with the same tool and without the need to create Layer Masks or use Adjustment Brushes as



would be the case in Photoshop or Lightroom. With judicious application of this tool, you can fix a range of common imaging problems. For example, if your model has just come in from the cold or is feeling a little flushed and has some redness in their skin, you'll be able to adjust the tint and restore a natural skintone with a few tweaks of the sliders.

## What's new?

**Virtual Makeup** Based on user feedback, Anthropics have introduced a full set of makeup enhancements in PortraitPro 15. The team researched real cosmetics before creating their digital equivalents in an attempt to deliver natural results. The tool includes a range of eyeliner styles, various eyeshadow colours and a wide selection of lipstick types. Makeup elements have individual settings for controlling intensity and colour, allowing you to create a range of moods, from subtle and casual to a more





PortraitPro

## Quickspec

**Street price** £29.95

Standard, £49.95 Studio,

£99.95 Studio Max

**Compatibility** Requires

Windows 10, Windows 8, Windows 7, Vista, or XP, with the latest updates installed.

Requires a Mac with OSX

10.6 or later. 2GB RAM

minimum recommended. To

handle larger images (8

megapixel or more) you

would benefit from having

4GB or more RAM and a 64

bit system. 1024 x 600

minimum supported display

size. 1GHz processor or

faster recommended.

**Free trial available** Yes.

Saving & printing disabled,

no time limit.

**Visit** [www.portraitprofessional.com/](http://www.portraitprofessional.com/)

## Improved mouth detection



PortraitPro 15 boasts new and improved mouth detection technology in the build. When you import an image, the software automatically places markers over the main features to ensure the lipstick, mascara and other edits appear in the right places. Less time repositioning these handles means more time for making your model look their absolute best.

exaggerated and stylised look. If you're looking to shoot several setups and costume changes with a single model but you haven't got a makeup artist on hand, the software allows you to try out a

number of looks and styles in moments, without the need to reapply makeup between shots.

**Lens Correct** The Lens Correct tool is not, as you might expect,

located in the Picture Controls section, which is for adjustments for the image as a whole. Instead, it's actually tucked away in the Face Sculpt Controls, which contains tools for altering your

model's face shape and bone structure. Moving the Lens Correct slider changes the spatial relationships between the features. It can be used to move the eyes, nose and mouth closer together or spread them further apart while leaving the face outline largely unaffected. This can be used to mitigate the distortion effects found in headshots taken with wide-angle lenses. It's not as fully-featured as the lens correction tools you'll find in Photoshop, but if you're looking for a quick fix, it's a nice extra feature to have.

If portraits are part of your photography, at the current price of £29.95 it's hard to find a reason not to recommend it.

## Virtual makeup effects



Lipstick



Mascara/Eyeline



Eye Shadow



Blusher

Each of the virtual makeup tools has individual settings for controlling intensity, colour, texture and even shape. These options allow you to create a range of looks, from subtle and casual to more exaggerated and outlandish. Among the effects available are:

**Highlighting** This changes the intensity of the lighting and shininess of the model's skin.

**Blusher** This option brushes some redness onto the model's cheeks.

**Mascara & Eyeliner** This is put in place automatically to emphasise and enlarge the eyes.

**Bronzing** Creates a darkening of the sides of the face for more definition.

## DIGITAL PhotoVerdict

With one-click editing and impressive relighting options, this offers great value at £29.95. Even better, the ability to make your own presets means PortraitPro 15 caters for those who prefer a more subtle look, too.

Rating





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## Canon EOS 760D

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\*Price includes £50 cashback from Canon UK. Offer ends 13.01.16

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AF-D 16mm f/2.8D Fisheye	£625.00	AF-S 85mm f/1.4G	£1,149.00	AF-S 16-85mm f/3.5-5.6G	£429.00
AF-S 20mm f/1.8G ED	£629.00	AF-S 105mm f/2.8G VR	£619.00	AF-S 17-35mm f/2.8 IF ED	£1,499.00
AF-D 20mm f/2.8	£463.00	AF-DC 105mm f/2.8G Nikkor	£805.00	AF-S 17-55mm f/2.8G DX	£979.00
AF-D 24mm f/2.8D	£369.00	AF-D 135mm f/2.0D	£1,029.00	AF-S 18-35mm f/3.5-4.5G	£519.00
AF-S Nikkor 24mm f/1.4G	£1,379.00	AF-D 180mm f/2.8 IF ED	£695.00	AF-S 18-105mm VR	£204.00
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**NEW EL BINOCULARS WITH FIELD PRO PACKAGE**

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# DIGITAL DOCTOR

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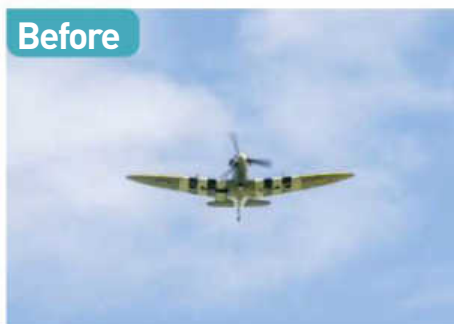
After



**C**lassic aircraft are always a great sight, and Terry Edwards sent us this shot of a flypast from a Spitfire, taken at village fête. "He was quite low and made three passes before dipping his wings and flying off. I took a brace of shots each time on my Nikon D200 and 70-300mm lens using the continuous AF mode, and this was the one that came out sharpest. I lifted the shadows and increased the vibrance in Camera Raw, but the shot isn't very exciting. Any ideas on giving it a new look?"

● **Digital Doctor says** Terry's shot is nicely focused and centrally composed, and his RAW conversion reveals a good level of colour and detail. These are the essential ingredients if you want to transport a plane to a more exciting place, and my first job was to cut out the subject. There's lots of intricate detail around the Spitfire's outline, so rather than using a quick Selection tool like the Magic Wand, I zoomed in really tight and used Photoshop's **Pen tool** to click around the outline, staying right on the edge. Once the Path around the plane was complete, I converted it into a Selection and hit **Ctrl+J** to punch the plane onto

Before



its own Layer. I then rifled through the hard drive to find a suitable, airy backdrop and found a shot of Mount Kenya, taken from a helicopter. I pasted the Spitfire into this, and rotated it using **Free Transform** to give a more exciting angle. The mountain was originally level, but I rotated this too to make the whole shot more dynamic.

The plane looked a little lonely in the vast mountain scenery, so with its Layer selected, I hit the **V** key to select the **Move tool**, and then held **Alt** and dragged it across to create a duplicate Spitfire on another Layer. I shrunk this down in size and rotated it a little with

**Free Transform** to give a pair of planes on a sortie. To give an idea of movement, I created a new Layer under the planes, and used a white brush to paint on some exhaust trails. I looped these back toward the mountain, then added some grey brush strokes to the smoke to give it more definition. To reduce its impact, I applied **Gaussian Blur** to the smoke Layer.

The final touch was adding a digital sun to the scene, courtesy of the **Lens Flare** filter.

The whole composite image was great fun to create, and it all came about thanks to Terry's inspiring shot.

## Contact Digital Doctor

To send one of your problem pics to our Digital Doctor, email it to [dpimages@bauermedia.co.uk](mailto:dpimages@bauermedia.co.uk) and tell us about the shot: where it was taken, why you took it and what you were looking to achieve. Include a mugshot of yourself with your picture, and the best entries will be published and receive some digital surgery from our resident Photoshop guru!





Focal length: 15mm Exposure: F/8.0 1/40 sec ISO400

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